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TOM OREO;

— OR, —

LITTLEBEE'S MINE.

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS.

SCENES IN PARIS AND NEW YORK CONTRASTED
WITH ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIFE IN NEW
SILVER MINING REGIONS.

BY
FRANK J. SCOTT



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To Joseph Jefferson,
The Actor,
This Play is Respectfully Inscribed
by the Author.

INTRODUCTION.

DURING the seasons of '80 to '83, the writer was one of the pioneer explorers of a part of the Saw-tooth range in Central Idaho, in constant contact with mine prospectors in the mountains, summers, and winters occasionally meeting with mine brokers, or "promoters," in New York. Some of the contrasts in life and business between these two extremes of society, impressed me as good material for a play; and although I had no experience in this field of literature, the desire to picture what was in my mind became so strong that in the summer of 1883, while at Hailey, Idaho Territory, I wrote the following play. Returning to the East in the fall, I found the country was being flooded with a mass of new plays—mostly roaring comedies; and that the taste for the latter seemed universal. I concluded that this sober child of mine would have little welcome in the midst of that hilarious crowd. I therefore put the manuscript away in a draw—to season. Quite lately I became curious, after its three years storage, to read it. As the result, I have to confess to a grave indiscretion. Though a married man, and well along in years, I actually fell in love with Littlebee's wife! A gush of affection also came back for Oreo, who proves such a noble fellow, that I cannot resist a fatherly impulse to introduce him to all my friends. Hence this print.

While Oreo and the rest of the family were growing on my hands in the fair valley of Wood River, near the peaks of the rugged Saw-Tooth mountains, there was one actor constantly associated with Oreo in my mind;—and but one. Who *could* it be but rare old Joseph Jefferson? If, thought I, if only Jefferson would personate Oreo, the name might become distinguished. But when the play was done and could have been sent to him, there came before me the impression that Mr. Jefferson only plays the pieces he learned when younger, and would be bored by having his attention called to a novice's new play when the world is filled with better old

ones. I was humbled also to think that he might, on unrolling the manuscript to the light, cast one glance of agony upon its numerous leaves, and then with a joyous smile of relief, consign it to the fire. So neither he nor any other actor has had an opportunity to tell me—"burn it, Mr. Scott,—burn it." With more generosity, I can now give them an opportunity to burn it then selves. If any of the profession receive a copy, (in which case they are suavely invited to read it from beginning to end,) they are hereby reminded that if it serves them in no other way, it will start a fire, light many cigars, or nestle gratefully as curl-paper about the heads of the fair ones into whose hands it may fall. Since nothing is lost in this world, (the printer is paid,) I now make bold to throw this little winged seed down among the drifts of autumn leaves that nourish old earth by their decay, and occasionally warm into growth and permanent life one in a thousand of the seeds they cover.

FRANK J. SCOTT.

Toledo, O., December 20th. 1886.

PLAN OF PLAY.

ACT I.

SCENE 1. Paris. Introduces Thomas Oreo, Isabella Vernon and George Newcomb.

SCENE 2. Isabella Vernon's parlors, Hotel L'Athéné, Paris.

SCENE 3. Isabella in her chamber.

SCENE 4. New York. Two years after preceding. Introduces Charles Frederick Littlebee and his wife, Dolly Littlebee, just married. Both are old-family cockney New Yorkers, in quite moderate circumstances. Littlebee is elated over the purchase of a so-called mine, into which he has been inveigled by brokers.

SCENE 5. Boreel Building, New York. Introduces Baitem and Stringem, the mine brokers, and Jim Also, "the honest miner."

SCENE 6. Residence of Mr. Weave, 57th street, of the firm of Weave and Grab, bankers. Introduces Mr. Weave and Mrs. Weave, (formerly Isabella Vernon,) and others.

SCENE 7. Littlebee's home, same evening.

ACT II.

SCENE 1. Shoshone, Idaho Territory. Passenger stage to the mines. Introduces characters peculiar to the country, with Oreo and Littlebee meeting for the first time.

SCENE 2. Rocky Dam--a mining camp. Stage unloading. A "hotel."

SCENE 3. A garret corral of miners' beds. Littlebee writing Dolly.

SCENE 4. Street of Rocky Dam. Oreo befriending Littlebee.

SCENE 5. In the mountains. The mine swindle disclosed.

SCENE 6. Mrs. Littlebee in New York, reading Charles' letters.

ACT III.

SCENE 1. Oreo's cabin, near Rocky Dam. Oreo, his men, and Littlebee.

SCENE 2. Littlebee in the mountains with Oreo's prospectors.

SCENE 3. Oreo's cabin. Return from prospecting.

SCENE 4. Mrs. Littlebee in plain rooms in New York, with a spinster aunt, reading Charles' letters.

ACT IV.

SCENE 1. Paris. Hotel L'Athéné;--(fifteen years after preceding scene.) Littlebee's parlors. Mr. and Mrs. L., with two daughters. Strange rencontres.

SCENE 2. Hotel L'Athéné attic room. Mrs. Weave dying. Oreo and servants.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

THOMAS OREO, *a traveled man.*

ISABELLA VERNON, [*becomes* MRS. WEAVE,] *an imperious, fiery woman.*

GEORGE NEWCOMB, *a youth "doing" Europe.*

CHARLES FREDERICK LITTLEBEE, *a young New Yorker.*

DOLLY LITTLEBEE, *his wife.*

MR. BAITEM, *a mine broker.*

MR. STRINGEM, *his partner.*

MR. WEAVE, *a wealthy banker.*

JIM ALSO, *a miner.*

JUDGE PIKE, *a Missouri judge strayed West.*

SENATOR —, *of Washington.*

STAGE DRIVER, *from California.*

PONG WHONG, *from Canton.*

MR. GLASSER, *bar-keeper.*

MIKE QUARTZEYE, *a Yorkshire miner.*

CHRIS. PICKIT, *a Nevada miner.*

ORINETTE and TOMMIE, *Littlebee's daughters*

SPINSTER AUNT OF MRS. LITTLEBEE.

MARIE, *a French maid.*

Other servants.

LITTLEBEE'S MINE.

ACT I.

SCENE 1. Hotel in Paris. Tom Oreo, Geo. Newcomb, Servant.

Servant. [*Handing Oreo a card.*]

Oreo. George Newcomb! Show him up. [*Soliloquy.*—Am glad he's come. He may be shallow, but he's a jolly rattler, and—sincere. A society rag-bag with a gay cover, and good stuff in it. [*Enter Newcomb.*] Glad to see you, George. Good gracious! how tanned you are!

Newcomb. Been in Switzerland all summer—joined the Alpine Club, been grafted English on the ground line, [*shows his big walking shoes,*] and haven't had time to peel off soles or mountain skin.

Oreo. Did you really enjoy the mountain climbing?

Newcomb. I suppose so. The club swore 't was glorious, and—damn it—it's the thing to do, you know. When you come down to the hotels the ladies all ask you—have you been to the Jungfrau?—the Wetterhorn?—the Aarhorn?—the Schreckhorn?—and the Lord only knows how many other horns, except the horns we like best—and a fellow likes to say—oh, yes! and tell about the hair-breadth 'scapes on the icy cliffs, the dizzy heights, the fearful crevasses, and a' that and a' that. The dear creatures are as curious as Desdemona; but they prefer going to dinner to hearing the end of your story just the same. When I talked to Isabella Vernon about our trip to Jungfrau crest, she had a far-away look, as if she wished herself a man to do those big things, and then coolly said:—"Why did n't you stay up there?" She's always cutting a fellow up just when he least expects it. You're the only man, Oreo, she's decent to.

Oreo. She's a magnificent girl. But the man who wins her for a wife will live in a cyclone. I'd like to see her again. We had a happy time in Rome together last winter.

Newcomb. She's in Paris now, at the Hotel L'Athéné, and told me not an hour ago that she would be glad to see you.

Oreo. I shall go at once. How did she come out with that Lord Duden who went for her so confidently about the time I was leaving?

Newcomb. [*Laughing.*] Oh! the woman! When you were there she was quite sweet on him: was n't she? Well, the moment you were gone she snubbed him and cut him up so awfully that he picked up his baggage and quit Rome. Ha! Ha! Ha!—how innocently she said to him one day looking straight at him—"Is n't it queer, Lord Duden, I never see an English nobleman but what I involuntarily look to see the length of his ears. But then yours," she added kindly,—“are no longer than a nobleman's should be:—only your head is so small they look so!”

Oreo. Beautiful leopard!—with the feline instinct to play with her prey before crunching it. She was born so. She can't help it.

Newcomb. They say in Rome that Tom Oreo might tame her if no one else could.

Oreo. When Tom Oreo takes a wife it will not be to play Van Amburg. I am credited with a strong will; but when I have to think of a wife as a beast-tamer does of the tiger he is about to cove, I'd leave her. I wont be dominated or hen-pecked by man or woman; but before I'd try to mould or subdue the spirit of Isabella Vernon, I'd go to the jungles of India and try my powers on creatures of inferior capacity. No, no, no, George;—a wife that has to be subjugated is not for my cabin.

Newcomb. But were n't you smitten a little—eh?

Oreo. Of course I was;—and will be again when I see her. But Tom Oreo's will, is—*not* to cross swords with a woman; especially if I love her.

Newcomb. You're afraid?

Oreo. Yes, that's just it. I might maim her. She'd surely cripple me. What sort of a ménage would that make?

Newcomb. Your head is level, Tom.—but—look out!

Oreo. Now tell me all about your travels since last winter.

Newcomb. Another time, Tom. Dropped in now just to say how d'ye do, and to deliver Isabella's message, and must get out of these barges [*his shoes*] instantan. Am at the L'Athéné. *Au revoir.*

Oreo. [*Alone.*] Well, I might as well go to meet my charmer at once.

[*End*]

SCENE 2. Isabella Vernon's Parlors, Hotel L'Athene, Paris.

[*Servant brings in Mr. Oreo's card.*]

Isabella. [*Takes card, flushes, smiles, passes before the glass, adjusts her hair, pronounces in a tone of deep satisfaction, Tom Oreo.*—Show the gentleman up, Marie. [*Oreo enters.*]

Oreo. Welcome to Paris, Miss Vernon. [*With frank and cordial greeting.*]

Isabella. [*Holding his hand.*] Am real glad to see you so promptly. Mr. Oreo; was afraid you might have left Paris, or might be too much occupied with other friends to come so quickly. Did George see you?

Oreo. Yes, Miss Vernon; I have just left him and wished to lose no time in answering your kind summons. How are you? But it's stupid

of me to ask ! You cannot be deceitful enough to look so superbly and not be well.

Isabella. With all my faults, Mr. Oreo, I hope *you* will credit me with not being deceitful. [*She laughs aloud.*] But they do say—some do—that I 'm a she devil! but there's this great difference between me and the horned old gentleman—he is deceitful, and I am not. Is n't that so, Mr. Oreo ?

Oreo. Certainly. No one who *knows* Isabella Vernon would charge that.

Isabella. But you don't add that you disbelieve the common report of my resemblance, otherwise, to the Prince of Darkness!

Oreo. I am too partial a judge to trust you to the common jurors.

Isabella. I do hope, my good friend, you think better of me than the rabble of people I meet. I tread on them, and they hate me. But you—*we* at least are equals—and if *you* respect and admire me I am content that the crowd hate me as much as they please.

Oreo. The royal magnolia has little need to ask the traveller under its bloom to respect and admire it.

Isabella. What a finished flatterer you've got to be. But I am weak enough to like it from you, Mr. Oreo. Am so glad to see you so soon—and havn't even taken your hat!

Oreo. May be it 's safer to keep hold of it should you become dangerous, and I need to run.

Isabella. Then I'll keep it to hold you. But Mr. Oreo, you are not one to run either from friend or enemy.

Oreo. So far mistaken. I often run from both. Friends may beguile to do what one had better not do, and enemies are better avoided than quarrelled with.

Isabella. Do you never enjoy quarrelling ?

Oreo. Never.

Isabella. Nonsense. We quarrelled all the time we were in Rome ; and I flattered myself you rather enjoyed it—at least you struck back quite lustily when *I* quarrelled, and cut and came again—without avoiding it much.

Oreo. Well—yes. I do like to *play* war with the tongue—provided always I don't hurt anybody—and don't get hurt. That 's sparring—fencing—not fighting.

Isabella. But when it comes to real fighting, that must be ever so much more interesting. If I were a man I'd like it. Now be honest. Don't you sometimes feel like running a man through—just to see him at your feet—and you with your foot on him ?

Oreo. No.

Isabella. And you pretend to say you never feel like cutting a man up—some man you despise or hate, for instance ?

Oreo. Yes, momentarily; but unless he attacked me first, I'd rather turn my back on the man than hurt him first.

Isabella. Mr. Oreo, you're not half that much of a christian as you'd

make believe. You've as much devil in you as I have, only you haven't the frankness to let it out.

Oreo. Exactly. That's just the part of me that I don't want to let out. I want to put my foot on it and say—There! little devil, stay down! *stay down!!* I won't let you out if I'm strong enough to keep you down.

Isabella. Really, Mr. Oreo, you're taking a new role—the christian philosopher! But I like you better when we are quarrelling.

Oreo. When we are playing with foils you mean. Suppose instead of foils I use a rapier and wound you deeply?

Isabella. I would wound you and have my revenge.

Oreo. Result! Two ruffled, damaged, maimed specimens of humanity, ugly with hate, instead of two healthy, clean, good natured ones. The boys' game with mud-balls seems to me refined and cleanly compared with the business of grown men and women who fight to make wounds with tongue, pen or sword, that neither water, soap nor oil can cleanse or cure.

Isabella. Then we'll call our quarrels mud-balling, and be children again.

Oreo. Who will throw the first mud?

Isabella. Of course the man is always the aggressor—when women are in question. Abuse me if you dare!

Oreo. Mud-balls at Juno! What a horrible suggestion.

Isabella. Say an arrow at Venus, from the quiver of Achilles.

Oreo. To frighten, but not to wound: for what warrior would wound the Goddess of Love?

Isabella. Must you not wound to conquer? The Goddess has her archer. She would like no better sport than to lodge cupid's arrow in the heart of Mr. Oreo.

Oreo. Imagine me like a grizzly bear, stuck full of arrows that do not reach the heart. I face the Goddess and accept the battle. But my dear friend, let us change the subject.

Isabella. [*Blushing and enraged.*] You defy me and do not—I like me enough to—fight for me. "Magnolia,"—[*impetuously and scornfully*] "Juno,"—"Venus!" Fool am I to drink your flattering words as if there were a heart behind them: you the only man I did not despise—aye [*fiercely*]—whom I loved—turned to ice when I have betrayed my heart. Go.

Oreo. My dear old friend, patience.

Isabella. Go.

Oreo. Isabella—

Isabella. GO.

Oreo. Isabella!

Isabella. GO! or I'll kill thee! [*Seizes a paper knife and rushes at him, striking a fierce blow at his heart, breaking the knife; then rushes from the room in a paroxysm of baffled rage and mortification.*]

Oreo. [*Slightly wounded.*] All my own fault. I deserve to be stabbed with more than a wooden dagger for having played with the eternal fire. [*He takes his hat and retires sorrowfully.*]

SCENE 3. Isabella in her chamber, pacing the floor with impetuous agitation.

[*Servant brings a note. She opens it in rage and seeing Orco's writing crunches it, throws it on the floor and stamps on it; paces the floor again a few moments, then stops by the letter, hesitatingly picks it up, uncrumples it, draws a deep breath, and reads it.*]

[*Letter.*]

Isabella Vernon:—Hate me if you will, but read these few words. I shall be gone when they reach you. I received news only a few days since that all my fortune had been lost by the administrator of my father's estate. It necessitates my return to the States to begin work for subsistence. I was all-glad to learn of your unexpected return to Paris, so that I might renew for one hour only the pleasure your company has always given me. I wanted your kindly wishes and good bye, never dreaming that conversation could lead where it did, and barred by the change of my fortune from permitting myself to think for one moment of love or wedlock in connection with my admiration and friendship for Isabella Vernon. Forgive—and do not hate me.

Thy friend,

T. OREO.

[*Isabella throws herself prone upon the bed, burying her head in her hands.*]

[*End of Scene 3.*]

SCENE 4 Scene, New York, two years after preceding. Persons, Charles Frederick Littlebee and Mrs. Littlebee, [Dolly,] at home after dinner—evening.

Littlebee. [*Putting down his paper and going to Dolly's chair to kiss her.*] Well, Dolly, I've got something to tell you to night that will make you prick up your ears and wonder all over.

Dolly. What in the world is it? Now don't tease and keep me waiting.

Littlebee. Guess, then.

Dolly. Jenny Todd married?

Littlebee. Guess again.

Dolly. It is n't Mary Glover, is it?

Littlebee. No, no, no. Can't you guess anything but weddings?

Dolly. Well, what can it be then?

Littlebee. Can't you tell by my looks what it is?

Dolly. Oh yes! You've gone and bought that sweet dress we were looking at the other day at Lord's;—you know I told you we could not afford it—but you are always doing such sweet things for me, darling. [*Kisses him.*]

Littlebee. [*A little nettled.*] No, pet; I did n't go and do it this time: I was prudent—perhaps selfish and sordid.

Dolly. Don't ever say that, Charles. You know you could n't be selfish if you were to try. I know what it is:—you've been getting that love

of a spring suit that I told you about—that suit I saw in Brooks'; I wished all the time you could have it to wear this summer when we go to Squam beach or somewhere. And now you've got it? Oh won't you look toney! [*Clapping her hands.*] Now, it's real stupid of you to call yourself selfish when you know you will need it—and I shall be so proud of you. You know I'd rather have you get that suit than anything in the world.

Littlebee. Oh you are a woman!

Dolly. I suppose that's why you married me.

Littlebee. Yes, I must admit that that had something to do with it. Yes, I rather think—perhaps—that your being a woman had a material influence in drawing me into—in inspiring those sentiments of affection and—

Dolly. Getting married.

Littlebee. Yes. That about expresses the whole thing in a nut-shell. Thank heaven I did not marry a man. Why, Dolly, I would n't give the right of eminent domain over that little finger for all the men in the world, not to say anything about the lips and a' that and a' that. [*Kisses her again.*] But you goose, you have n't come within gun-shot of guessing what I've been doing.

Dolly. Of course I won't guess it if it's something selfish and sordid—unless you call it selfish to have me all to yourself. But what made you think of the eminent Domine when you held my hands?

Littlebee. [*Laughing immoderately.*] That's too good. Dolly—too good to keep. Eminent domain—eminent Domine. Ha, ha, ha! What eminent Domine came into your head?

Dolly. Oh Charley, how mean you are! You are too mean for anything. It was you who mentioned about the eminent Domine and my little hands—you know it was—only you made slang and called him dough-main. You are really getting too careless and slangy in your conversation. Charles. It is n't respectful to nick-name ministers so. Why couldn't you say Domine plain, and not make fun of the minister in your shy way by calling him dough-main? You know, Charly, I don't love our minister a speck compared with you—but if you laugh at me so, I don't know what I shall do.

Littlebee. Oh pet, I won't, I won't, I'm sorry. But it was so funny the way you misunderstood me.

Dolly. I didn't misunderstand you. I know what you said, and I don't know what there is to laugh at.

Littlebee. Well, dear; I'll take it all back if you'll forgive me and come back to business.

Dolly. I don't want to hear about business.

Littlebee. Don't you want to hear the important and extraordinary step in life that I have been taking to-day? the most important, Dolly, that I have ever taken—except that one when we—you know. Now Dolly I want to talk this step all over with you, for you see, if you don't think as I do about it perhaps our happiness is gone forever.

Dolly. Oh, Charles! What have you been doing?

Littlebee. [*Taking her on his lap.*] Well, Dolly, in a word, I've been buying a mine!

Dolly. [*Laughing outright.*] You bought a mine! You, my little Charles Frederick Littlebee, with two thousand dollars a year—you bought a mine? How big we are! Are you Vanderbilt? Am I Mrs. Mackay? or is my Charles crazy? or, you rascal! putting a joke on me again?

Littlebee. [*With boy assumption of dignity.*] No, I'm doing nothing of the sort. I, CHARLES FREDERICK LITTLEBEE—I, HAVE BOUGHT A MINE!

Dolly. Why, Charles, you know it takes millions and millions to buy a mine? Oh you rogue! I know now. You don't fool me again. You've been buying government land like Bob Akerman out in Michigan or Oregon, or some of those western territories and you've got a coal mine on it. There! Haven't I guessed? I heard Bob say that any wild land is liable to have coal on it, and you've got a coal mine. Haven't I guessed?

Littlebee. That's a pretty good guess Dolly, for a little girl that don't know anything about mining; [*with the air of a man who knows HE KNOWS.*] but it is something far different. I have bought a *silver mine*—a real *silver mine*, though I am not Vanderbilt or any other big-bug. I have bought it with my own money, too.

Dolly. How can that be Charles? You have told me always that you have only two thousand dollars a year and we would have to live so snug to make both ends meet, and all that, and that you were afraid to marry until you got the position of secretary in that great mining company—with a name so long it ought to have its head and tail cut off—so that you got twelve hundred dollars a year more—and then you said:—"Now darling, I can support you," and we got married. Now how *have* you bought a mine?

Littlebee. Well, you see these things go by skill in finance! Let me lay it out to you. You know father, when he died, left me forty thousand dollars in United States six per cent. bonds. That gave me twenty-four hundred dollars interest a year. But last year the government called in my bonds and gave new ones at four per cent., making me only sixteen hundred dollars interest a year.

Dolly. Oh! the mean thing to take your six per cents. and stick up four per cents. in their place!

Littlebee. The government has a right to pay its debts, you know. The government would have paid me my forty thousand dollars if I had chosen; but you know how Jack Hood and Will Jackson and Bob Fast went down in a jiffy and lost all they had in stocks about that time; and Roger Walters got ruined in grain, and Jim Whitehead in cotton, and Fred Wines in log-wood speculations; so I concluded to be on the safe side and stick to the government. I let the government keep my money.

Dolly. Why, Charley, I didn't know that you were supporting the government—and never said a word to me about it! Did the President send for you? Tell me all about it.

Littlebee. No—I—I sent for the President—but he didn't come. But the

Secretary of the Treasury wrote me all that was necessary, and I closed the business through Weave and Grab, my bankers in Wall Street, who collect my coupons. Well, that brought me down to sixteen hundred dollars a year. One day I was talking to Mr. Weave how hard it was to come down from twenty-four hundred dollars to sixteen hundred dollars, and how I had hoped to marry soon, but must wait till I had more income. It was very kind the way he interested himself in me, and asked me how I would like to take the position of Secretary to a mining company. He said the salary would be merely nominal at first—twelve hundred dollars, or that matter—but it might lead to important connections with the company—and—if I would accept it—thought he could get it for me. I told him that there was nothing I so much desired as to be an industrious member of the business world. Nothing could give him more pleasure, he said, than to be of service to me. Good of him, wasn't it?

Dolly. Yes, indeed.

Littlebee. A few days after, I received a note from Weave and Grab requesting me to meet the board of directors of the Deep-down Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining and Milling Company, office No. 320 Boreel building, at three o'clock the next day. I have told you how polite and pleasant they are to me, and how I would never have dared to marry you, my pet, if it had n't been for that extra hundred a month I got for doing nothing for the great company. There's Mr. Baitem—he was the first man of the directors Mr. Weave introduced me to. I never have seen a more perfect gentleman—and such a big head and generous air. Mr. Weave introduced me as a young capitalist who desired to obtain some little business connection—just to keep him from rusting—as it were. That expressed it exactly, Dolly. You know how I hate to be idle. When I talked with Mr. Baitem about how it pinched us to be getting only sixteen hundred dollars out of our forty thousand invested with the government, he assured me that he could make much better investments than that for me. But he would not take the responsibility of advising me. He is very conscientious. But I've had my eyes and ears open, Dolly, I can tell you; and I've been hearing things about mine investments and mine developments and all that; and I've come to the conclusion I might just as well be a rich man as a poor one. Mr. Baitem is full of information, and has told me everything about mines—and I've been reading all about them too. There are not many men that know more about mines and mining than I do, Dolly.

Dolly. Why should they, dear? Only think of it, Charlie; there's Tom Alluck who don't know enough to keep out of a puddle, and he's got more money back in a year than he had all the rest of his life. Of course a man who knows all about mining as you do, must do better than he.

Littlebee. Yes, and not stumble on it, either, but get it [*with a look of solid wisdom*] by judgment, foresight, knowledge, experience. Well, Dolly, to make a long story short, I've bought a mine recommended to me by Mr. Baitem after a thorough investigation by *myself*.

Dolly. How's that, Charley? How did *you* investigate a mine?

Littlebee. By information from various parties, one of whom is a plain, honest, practical miner, and has seen it. Another is a geologist who knows the kind of rocks where the mine is, and tells me that great mines are found in just such rocks ; and one is liable at any moment to strike it rich. Mr. Baitem and I went over all the facts together:—the location, not a hundred miles from the great Eureka and in the Rocky Mountains where all great mines have been found ; the geological formation, character of the vein, and the very ore itself, a piece of which the miner, Jim Also, (funny name, is n't it ?) brought away with him in his vest pocket ; and he says the mountain is full of the same sort wherever you find it. I had that ore assayed by a disinterested assayer, and he tells me emphatically that if there is plenty of ore in the mine half as good as that, the owner *ought* to be a rich man. Now, Dolly, what do you think of my judgment as a financier and mine-examiner ?

Dolly. Why of course, if you have investi—katydid—what a horrid word that is—of course *you know*.

Littlebee. Well, after establishing fully the profitable character of the mine, I got it of course as cheap as I could—I paid only twenty thousand dollars for it. That leaves twenty thousand dollars of my capital in reserve, you know. Isn't that prudent ? If I go out there and find it all right, Mr. Baitem has promised to put it on the New York stock market—and then—my fortune will be made. But its bed time; we must not talk any more, or we'll dream of it.

Dolly. Indeed I will. I'll dream of the mines of Golconda—

Littlebee. Why, that's just the name of my mine!

Dolly. And Mrs. Mackay and Paris.

Littlebee. Well, we'll have to go to bed first.

Dolly. Oh, Charley, I knew you were good, but I never dreamed that you were a great financier supporting the government—and now a *mine*.

Littlebee. Mine own. [*His arm around her waist.*]

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 5. Baitem & Stringem's office of the Deep-down, &c. M. & M. Co., 320 Boreel building. Littlebee and Jim Also. Baitem and Stringem alone in their office the afternoon preceding the previous scene.

Baitem. Ha ! ha ! The lamb came down easy, didn't he ! If it wasn't for having to divide with that blood-sucker over in Wall street, this would be a pretty good year's business.

Stringem. You were so devilish slow getting the boy 'on the hook that I feared you might let him slip, but the sight of his bonds made me feel again that my name is Stringem. Now, we've got to pay Jim Also one thousand dollars for the mine. He's beneath your fine art partner. I'll pay him this evening—take him out to the theater, and if I don't get that thous-

and into some of our lame stock to-morrow, I'll pay the champagne and you make the party. But Weave and Grab are another sort of game. They intend to eat us.

Baitem. Smooth's the word—slow and steady. Leave them to me. By the way, I think we had better go up to Weave's house this evening after dinner so as to get rid of Grab. His blunt hoggishness disconcerts me.

Stringem. Good idea.

[*Enter Jim Also, the honest miner.*]

Baitem and Stringem. [*Cordially.*] Good evening, good evening, Mr. Also. Just the man we want to see. We've got your thousand dollars for the Golconda, [*Stringem hands a check for \$1,000.*] This will be good at the bank to-morrow. Better than fifty dollars isn't it? Ha, ha! Here's ten dollars to congratulate with at the theater this evening. Where shall we go? After the theater—scenes in New York high life, eh—eh; old boy?

Also. Say California Minstrels, first.

Stringem. All right, get tickets for two, and I will join you between eight and nine. Have an engagement after dinner.

Also. Shall I wait for you?

Stringem. No, no, no, old fellow. Go in and see the fun when it begins. Turn down a seat for me and I'll be in at the death.

Also. All right. Let's have a drink.

[*End of Scene 5.*]

SCENE 6. Mr. Weave's residence, 57th street. Baitem and Stringem are ushered into the parlor.

Weave. Ah! Good evening, gentlemen. Glad to see you. What's the news? Walk into the library. [*Cigars are passed.*]

Baitem. Well, Mr. Weave, we have taken your lamb into our fold and his money is safe where it is subject to our negotiations.

Weave. You refer to the gentle Littlebee, I presume. Did you take him in entire, or did you permit him to withhold a part of his bonds?

Baitem. We exercised due consideration and kindly accepted twenty thousand dollars for Also's Golconda. The remainder of the bonds he insisted on reserving for his wife—and family that may be. I commended his prudence but suggested rare investments in store for him.

Weave. You have done fairly well; though, if Grab were here, he would get red-in-the-face-mad to find you making two bites of this little cherry. You'll have to keep the boy in as secretary till you get the other half. It takes time to make a good finish of these things. I will see that Littlebee's reservation cheerfully follows its betterhalf in due time. Have you the bonds?

Stringem. Not here, but on deposit *in escrow*.

Baitem. And we have simply come up to-night to arrange for the division to-morrow.

Weave. That is very simple. I don't know, gentlemen, what *arrangement* there is to talk about. Am always glad to see you, but the division is simply twenty divided by two. When I introduce you to high-toned gentlemen from the wealthy clientage that my house has been gathering under its wing, we are content to divide equally with you. You understand, and I presume appreciate the favor.

Baitem. Really, my good friend, we should be very blind as well as ungrateful did we *not* appreciate the favors we have had of this kind from your great house; but in coming here we did hope, after the patient attention we have given to your young friend in securing his bonds to the amount of twenty thousand dollars, you would naturally make deduction, first, of what we have had to pay for this mine—to say nothing of our professional services.

Stringem. [*Lying*.] I passed our check for five thousand dollars to the owner of the mine this afternoon to get deed for Mr. Littlebee. The deed and bonds lie *in escrow*, waiting our arrangements with you. We certainly ought to be credited with that amount before dividing.

Weave [*Blandly*.] Gentlemen, I am sorry to have to discuss this matter. Heretofore, though the sums were smaller, I have accepted the half of the totals you have got from any clients. I cannot [*with bland hauteur*] look into the details of your purchases. Understand, our friends are introduced to you only on this basis.

Baitem. My dear Mr. Weave, rest assured that the little matter of a few thousand dollars shall not stand in the way of a continuance of the pleasant business relations you have done us the honor to open with us.

Stringem. [*Looking at his watch*.] My engagement at the theatre. We must go. Good evening, Mr. Weave, we'll meet you at your bank in the morning.

Baitem. And will permit no differences to mar the harmony of our business relations. Good night, Mr. Weave.

Weave. Good night, good night, gentlemen. Always charmed to see you. [*Exit*.]

[*Enter Mrs. Weave (Isabella Vernon) greatly agitated and en dishabille.*]

Mrs. Weave Mr. Weave! Mr. Weave! Robbers have been in the house this very evening while we were at dinner. My diamond tiara is gone! and I don't know what else!!

Weave. Are you quite sure?

Mrs. Weave. Am I a fool? Can I not tell whether they are gone or not? Did I not take my large jewel box out before dinner to select what I should wear to the Vanderbilt's this evening, and take from it the tiara and the large solitaire, and throw the latter in the box again, and leave the tiara on the dressing case? I just came out of the bath room to dress when I miss the tiara. My dressing maid saw it where I left it before dinner. She dined when we dined—went *up* with me and exclaimed—"where is the tiara?" The window was open. Some robber scaled the grille on the next house when we were at dinner and got out with it, perhaps out of

the front door. Can't you start the police on the track—instantly? * * Why! you're as stolid as a post! Don't you intend to *do* something?

Weave. My dear Isabella, the first thing to do is to plan what to do. I will telephone for the chief of police at once. In the meantime see if all the servants are in the house.

[*Enter Marie, the dressing maid.*]

Mrs. Weave. [*With a start.*] Where's my laundry maid, Molly? Look for Molly! [*Telephones from the hall to the laundry for Molly, who is not in the house.*] I don't want to suspect Molly.

Weave. I will put the police on her track.

Mrs. Weave. No! you will not! *I will not have my servants advertised thieves.* How cool you are! [*Suddenly changing from excited impetuosity and coldly sarcastic.*] But a diamond tiara is nothing to the rich Mr. Weave! Go, then, and get Tiffany's opened, and have another here before nine. Consult with the police at your elegant leisure, but remember we are to be at Vanderbilt's at ten—we—and the tiara! [*Exit imperiously.*]

Weave. [*Alone. Telephones to chief of police.*] No sooner gathered in than out it leaks. That tiara cost just the amount of Littlebee's money—a thief has got double my share! and the raging queen must have another, as if they grew like blackberries! And I, who dare all things in Wall street might as well be in the flames of hell as disappoint her to-night—and she won't stop with the cost of the old one either. The more I make, the shorter of money I seem to be. But that woman—My God! one might as well run into a cyclone as face her to night without diamonds that eclipse all others. Diamonds or death! Bah! she's too much for Weave. [*Sits and broods, then goes to the window.*]

[*Bell rings; enter chief of police.*]

Chief. Good evening, sir. What's the business.

Weave. Wife's room entered while we were at dinner; diamond tiara gone.

[*Mrs. W. enters.*]

Chief. Good evening, madam, sorry to hear—

Mrs. Weave. Not a particularly good evening, sir, for me.

Chief. Will madam describe the article?

Mrs. Weave. A diamond tiara of fifteen stones—the centre one the largest in the city—made to fit my head.

Chief. Do you suspect any of your servants?

Mrs. Weave. [*Stamping her foot.*] I *never suspect* my servants. But, one is out: Molly, my laundry maid, a pretty English blonde. I don't *suspect* her, but I want her back instantly. I will find you her portrait.

Chief. I will find her. [*With a knowing smile.*] Will you show me the scene of the theft?

Mrs. Weave. Follow me, sir.

[*Exit all.*]

SCENE 7. Littlebee's house evening after the preceding. Hall; taking off his overcoat.

Littlebee. Ah, my pet, I feel as if I must compress a whole month of love into one short evening. I must——

Dolly. Oh darling, that's nice—but what's the matter? You look excited—and sort of strange!

Littlebee. I was just going to tell you that it is absolutely necessary for me to go out west to see about the Golconda mine. It must be opened—unlocked.

Dolly. Charles! You don't mean to say you are going to leave me. Stop! don't say another word! You shall not go away.

Littlebee. I must, I must. Hear me. Half my fortune is invested in this mine. Half my income stops till I get it out of the mine. When men make daring ventures for fortune, they must follow them up and see them through. Sweet wife, [*embracing her,*] I *must* leave you for a little while—just a little time. Forgive the necessity and be brave, Dolly. Why you little goose, you thought you would die when I had to leave you for three days last fall! But when I got back weren't you just as happy as if I hadn't been away? And didn't you like what I brought you?

Dolly. Yes, Charles; I kiss the ring for you when you're gone.

Littlebee. Well, then, when I come back from the mine think of what I may bring you.

Dolly. Only bring me my Charles Frederick Littlebee. But I can't bear it. I can't bear it. You won't be gone many days, will you?

Littlebee. Well, let's calculate. If I make no stop on the way, it will take six days by rail and stage to Shoshone.

Dolly. Oh Charles! Charles! You're going right in among the dreadful Indians. Shoshone! I've heard of those horrible Shoshones. You *shall not go!*

Littlebee. [*Laughing.*] Why, you little scared deer, its going to be a railroad station on the Oregon Short Line Railroad, and there's no more danger of Indians than there is at Niagara Falls, where you bought those moccasins of a "dreadful," "horrible" squaw.

Dolly. Oh I'm sick with fear of what *may* happen.

Littlebee. Now, let's go on with our calculation. Six days to Shoshone, then two days stage to Rocky Dam—that's eight days to go out: palace car on the rails—splendid Concord stage to Rocky Dam. I suppose I must stay there several weeks to unlock the mine and get everything running; for you must know, Dolly, [*with an air of importance,*] I *must see to everything myself*:—

"He who by the plow would thrive,
Must either hold the plow or drive."

Dolly. Oh Charles, you think of so many things and I can only think of one—how *can* I live with out you?

Littlebee. Say then that I must be gone about a month—*about* a month.

Dolly. Oh Charles—not a whole month?

Littlebee. I cannot say exactly—but *about* a month. Now can't you be a brave little wife that long without me? Think of how your father left your mother to go off with the Seventh regiment in 1861—to be gone—who knew how many years?

Dolly. If you must, go. [*Sobbing.*] But oh, I shall hate Mr. Weave and Mr. Baitem.

Littlebee. Dolly, Dolly, Dolly; [*chidingly,*] don't speak so of my best friends. Did not Mr. Weave get me that secretary salary—that enabled us to get married? And did not Mr. Baitem, with a kindness I shall always remember, give his time to me day after day, to give me an insight into mining and mining investments? But for him, I should never have got hold of the Golconda.

Dolly. Oh, but I shall hate him.

Littlebee. Well, well; you'll love me all the same, wont you? To-morrow morning at ten o'clock I must be off. The little trunk I had for our wedding trip, let's have that down and pack, and talk over our first little journey together—eh, dear? Come!

[*Exit with head bowed on his shoulder, raising it as the curtain falls, to say—*
"I'll try to be brave, Charley."}]

[*End of Act I.*]

ACT II.

SCENE 1. Terminus of O. S. L., at Shoshone. Stage mud-wagon; passengers piling in.

Driver. Stage coach, gentlemen! for Lava Beds, Hell-hole, Mountain Spring, Rocky Dam, Boise! Here's yer stage coach, gentlemen. *Hurry up!*

Littlebee. [*In a polite tone.*] Where's Gilmer & Salsbury's "Concord Coach?"

Driver. Here's yer *Kan-kerd* coach. Bundle in! Hurry up!

Littlebee. But I mean Gilmer & Salsbury's line of splendid Concord coaches.

Driver. I tell ye *this is it*. Get yer ticket and seat damn quick, or else stay with the Shoshones.

Judge Pile. Stranger, the driver is correct. This is the damned swindle they advertise. Ye can't better it. Get yer place at once.

Littlebee. I paid for a through ticket, including Concord coach.

Driver. The hell ye did. Why don't ye get in then and injoy it while yer young? [*Littlebee goes to sort his baggage.*] U. S. MAIL COACH, gentlemen! Pile in yer baggage—punch 'em in—fills in the chinks between ye, when yer rollin, yer know. Only keep a top ef ye can. HALLO THERE, Pong Whong! [*to Chinaman with his bundle.*] better put that bed-room set on top!

Whew!! [*looking at Littlebee's beautiful trunk,*] that's a daisy. I say, Cap. [*addressing Littlebee*], toss that purty band-box on deck. [*It is handed up by a stage hand.*] I'll lash her where the cayotes can see their faces in her when we get in the hills—that is—ef she don't chug into a lava hole fust. Here, Pong Whong! sit on her, and tumble into that bed riggin' of yourn, ef ye can't stick on.

Pong Whong. Me no slit on em--slip em off mos' some. Me no slitem top stagee. Me no pay for kill me.

Driver. No? Why not? Take a state-room inside, then. I say. Judge—look after the children. [*Winking and glancing at Littlebee.*]

Judge Pilce. Stranger, [*to Littlebee,*] better get in before that damned Chinee takes his pick of seats.

Littlebee. [*To the Judge*] Have you engaged your seat?

Judge Pilce. We don't have reserved seats in this part of the country, sir. This here is a free country. You're in God's country now, sir. No damned aristocracy or monopolies here, sir.

Tom Orco. Oh, no! This stage is God's line, stranger—isn't it? God's mud wagon line!! No monopoly! Ha, ha! [*To Littlebee*] Captain, better take the center of the middle seat; it's easier than the boot. You can tumble about every way and have some of the thick fellows to tumble into; and if you've got any whiskey you can swing 'round the circle with it—form the capstan of the ship, as it were.

Littlebee. [*Looking in, smiling.*] Being small you propose making me the pivot of the company! But, really, I shall disappoint you as to the whiskey. Wont cigars do?

Orco. That depends on whether you are a *multum in parvo* fellow—that is—how many have you got?

Littlebee. [*Showing half a dozen in fine case.*] Will this do?

Orco. For a few minutes. Where's your box? The judge and I and the senator here, [*pointing to a large reserved man in the corner,*] can make up the whiskey supply for the journey if the pivot will radiate the cigars.

Littlebee. Box is in the trunk. Driver, will I have time to get into my trunk?

Driver. No. What fer?

Littlebee. Cigars.

Driver. Always time for cigars and whiskey. While the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return for cigars and whiskey. Hurry up! [*Littlebee climbs up to his trunk*] They do say I'm a good judge of cigars, Cap. But I'm not one of them foolish chaps that gives an opinion on the fust trial. I test the little devils to see how they stand fire. Fire assay is the great test in this country. We're all preparin' fer the fire test in kingdom cum. There's suthin in one smoke—not much—when there's more in the box. The fust smoke may be damn bad. You'll get my judgment on the cigars when we git to the bottom of the box. [*Littlebee hands him two*]

Littlebee. Just try these.

Driver. Thank ye. Them 's got the air of high toned delicacies. Ef a feller is careless he 'll swaller 'em the first suck. Well, Cap., ef I should lose a few of 'em down my throat, I 'll see where you sit. *All aboard!*

Littlebee. I believe I 'd like to sit with you, driver, and see the country.

Driver. All right; but ken yer hang on all night when we're agoin' through the lava craters?

Littlebee. Don't we have a hotel to stop at?

Driver. Well—yais—we make some stops at hotels [*with a comical grimace*—so to speak—to change hosses, but the best rooms is all taken.

Littlebee. Who took them?

Driver. The hosses.

Littlebee. How 's that? Don't they make any provision for stage passengers?

Driver. Certainly. Provision enough—bacon an' beans; sometimes onions an' beefsteak, fried till it makes yer mouth water.

Littlebee. But I mean provision for sleep.

Driver. Why didn't ye say *bunks* then? No, Cap., there aint any time fer passengers ter bunk when we're swappin' hosses.

Littlebee. Then I 'd better get inside.

Orco. Of course you 'll get inside, unless you want to flap the driver all night with your ears or tumble into roadside canons. Get in, get in, Cap. Look out! don't spill those precious cigars. They 'd leak through the bottom of these mud wagons into dust too deep for resurrection. [*Littlebee tries to stow himself in a seat, Orco kindly helping him and holding his cigar box. The bottom of the stage filled with baggage and freight up to the seat. Littlebee gets one foot down to the floor and the other high up, bringing his knee near his chin.*]

Orco. There! is n't that snug?

[*Situation. Judge Pile in one back corner, the senator in the other and Orco between them. On the front seat a reared mother and child and big boy. Littlebee on the middle of the center seat with the Chinaman on one side of him and a ottish miner on the other.*]

Driver. All ready? [*Cracks his whip—horses dash off in a cloud of dust: the mud-wagon creaking and rattling.*]

SCENE 2. Stage unloading at Rocky Dam. Passengers covered with dust, getting out stiff, cramped unrecognizable. All shaking themselves and limbering.

Orco. Well, gentlemen, here we are—safe and sound in God's country by his great anti-monopoly mud-wagon line. Judge how are *you*? Enjoyed it of course. No aristocracy, no monopoly, on this line! Dust free and untrammelled as the birds of the air, rolling in golden clouds on the chariot wheels of the morning—mud-wagon. Glorious, isn't it? Isn't it, Judge?

Judge. Damnable. Hell on wheels.

Orco. What? Hell on wheels in God's country? Why, man; you're disrespectful.

Driver. [*To Pong Whong—tossing his bedding down on the wheels, and covering all with a fresh cloud of dust.*] Here! Pong Whong! Take up thy bed and walk.

Pong. You bleaks my bled you play me. You tam. You makes play me plenty-five dolla fer tam go-to-hell stagee. Now you bleaks my bled. Me fixee you. Me fixee you sloup slometime.

Driver. Fixee up my soup—poison 'em up, eh, Pong? Can't hurt a stage driver on this line. We're all brass lined and copper bottomed.

Pong. Me fixee you!

Orco. Well, Captain Littlebee! Isn't this the happiest moment of your life? In God's country and no extra charge? My God, man, you look as though you were not appreciating your pilgrimages. Considering the vile things we are and the infinity of torments in store for us, arn't we rather lucky dogs to leave the world, the flesh and the devil behind us, to bloom in the sunshine of this hospitable country where neither monopolies or aristocracies prevent us from being as dirty as we please? How is it with you, Judge? You don't enthuse?

Judge. Hell and damnation.

Littlebee. [*Shaking a cloud of dust from himself.*] Bah!

Orco. [*Going to the wash basin between the Judge and Littlebee, turning first to the Judge while washing.*] To which part of the country do you refer? Not to God's country, I hope. [*Then turns to Littlebee.*] Mr. Littlebee, from one of your cheerful and kindly temperament your disgust, not to say ingratitude, surprises me. Beyond the influences of a corrupt and debasing civilization—that's the term for it—is n't it, Judge?—and safely delivered out of God's own mud-wagons—why not say—*happy*.

Littlebee. I have 't learned to lie, yet.

Orco. Learned! Ha, ha! Don't have to learn here! It's in the air, sir. Lies are lighter than the mountain air. They float up in unseen strata from all the great east, and lay in films of golden vapor on all the mountains of this metaliferous country. You breathe them. Don't have to *learn*. Fancy here crystalizes into fact, so that one breathes lies in and out, till they seem the very breath of life—the sincere convictions of honest souls!

Littlebee. More's the pity.

Orco. As well blame a man for the absurdities of his religion when the comfort comes of the absurdity, as to slur a miner for the continuity of his fictions—his faith—his evidence of things not seen—his only substance of things hoped for.

Littlebee. I have n't said a word against miners. But where's the hotel, or inn, or whatever you call it, out here?

Orco. We are in the midst of it, Mr. Littlebee. Make yourself at home.

Littlebee. I'd like a room. Where is the landlord?

Orco. Behind the bar, there. He's too busy now to show the other end

of his establishment. Drink with me first, and then I'll get his best place for you. [*Goes to the bar with an at-home air.*]

Glasser.—(*the proprietor*). [*Seeing Tom for the first time.*] Hallo! Tom! Oreo! is that you? How are you, old fellow?

Oreo. As usual—overwhelmingly rich and liberal—of words. Mr. Littlebee is a friend from New York. I want you to give him the best place you've got. Now mix us the best drink you ever made. I won't ask you, Mr. Littlebee, what you prefer; for in coming to a new country I know you wish to learn the ways of the country, and Glasser's drinks are ways of pleasantness and all his paths are pieces of silver. [*To Glasser*] Mix for four.

Glasser. [*Preparing drinks—to Littlebee.*] Are you just from New York?

Littlebee. Yes, sir.

Glasser. Out to inspect our mines, I suppose.

Littlebee. Not exactly, but rather to look at my own, and direct its development.

Glasser. What mine is that?

Littlebee. The Golconda.

Glasser. I don't know any such mine. Is it in this neighborhood?

Littlebee. Why certainly—one of the—

Oreo. [*Turning to Senator Smith and Judge Pike.*] Come, fellow sufferers on life's dusty road, let's drink from the same spring—perhaps for the last time. I want our cheerful friend from New York to see what High Art is in the mountains. Glasser, I hope you've fixed these in one of your inspired moments. [*They drink.*]

Judge Pike. [*Drinks, nods his head with silent, lavish approval.*]

Senator. Mr. Oreo, that is not bad. Our Senate caterer in Washington couldn't improve on that. What do you call it—Mr.—Glass-eye—did they say?

Glasser. No, sir! *Glasser, sir.* I call that my electric motor.

Littlebee. Well named. I feel it tingling all through me already.

Oreo. And the way it goes is about as near perpetual motion as anything yet invented. [*Turns to Littlebee*] You were about to say something about your mine, Mr. Littlebee, when we attacked the drinks.

Littlebee. Oh—yes. I was merely saying to Mr. Glass—Glasser, that I suppose it one of the great mines of this part of the country—undeveloped ones, I mean. I have come out to unlock its ores—wind up the machinery and put it in motion.

Oreo. Is there machinery on the mine?

Littlebee. Perhaps not. I was speaking figuratively. Really, I do not know. I am here to see it—to start it up—set it to producing—exporting—ore—bullion—coin, and things of that sort.

Judge Pike. You're a lucky man if you have a mine that produces something. The only products I've seen are stocks and assessments.

Oreo. And the principal imports and exports—superintendents.

Littlebee. [*To Oreo.*] What does the Judge refer to?

Orco. Elegant engravings on bank note paper—"This is to certify that "A. P. L. (a pretty lamb,) is the owner of one thousand shares of the "Segregated, Consolidated, Ophir, Potosi, Golconda Gold and Silver Mining Company of Mogollon. Capital stock ten million dollars, in one "hundred thousand shares of one hundred dollars each, or ten million "shares of one dollar each, (it's immaterial,) signed by Daniel Greathead, "president, and Roger Caitiff, secretary. The wealthy John Robber, "O. Sogoodman and U. Smilenstab, directors. Office, New York City." In old times such men were put in the stocks; now they put stocks on other people.

Littlebee. Ah, yes! I understand. Inflated bubbles of reckless speculation. Yes, I have read all about them. But my mine is a solid business investment of my own—no fraud or hifalutin about it.

Senator. [*Pompously.*] I like to hear that—like to hear that. Honest and intelligent mining—*that* is what is wanting to develop the boundless resources of this vast mountain country. I welcome you, Mr. Littlebee, and your money, to this virgin field. You, and men like you—men who will take Nature by the horns—as it were, and wrest from the stubborn rock the gold and silver that move the world!

Orco. And who come in by the Star-route Senator! What did you say was the name of your mine, Mr. Littlebee?

Littlebee. The Golconda. Rather a high sounding name, I confess for a mine I only paid twenty thousand dollars for; but then these sturdy prospectors must be pardoned for a little extravagant enthusiasm when they do strike it rich. As plain people name their brats Alexander, Napoleon, Daniel Webster, and the like, so I suppose the poor miner can't find any name too good for his big find. At least I imagine the discoverer of my mine must have felt so when first its treasure opened before his eyes.

[*Looks of amused attention among miners in bar room.*]

Orco. You have never seen it?

Littlebee. Not yet. Hope to see it to-morrow.

Orco. Is it near here?

Littlebee. Certainly. [*Walks away.*]

Orco. [*Aside, to Glasser.*] (He 's been duped; I don't want him laughed at.) Please show Mr. Littlebee his room before somebody else gets his traps in it. [*To Littlebee.*] You are tired and dirty, and must want to get into clean clothes. I will go with you to see that your room is all right.

Littlebee. Thank you, thank you! I *am* tired, and do need to get out of this dirt. And—seems to me that motor has set me up a little—eh?

Orco. Allow me to see you comfortably settled. [*They follow Glasser up a ladder.*]

[*End of Scene 2.*]

SCENE 3. Glasser conducting Oreo and Littlebee in a garret through a corral of blanket beds on the floor to the end, separated from the rest by a white cotton cloth.

Glasser. Hope you'll find this comfortable.

Littlebee. [*Gently.*] Have you no furnished rooms?

Glasser. This is my *best*, sir. Mr. Goldburg, of San Francisco, president of the Great Mogul Consolidated, occupied it for a week. *He* was pleased with it; and he made a handsome bar-bill, to boot.

Littlebee. Oh, I shall get along very nicely in it, I've no doubt.

Oreo. Mr. Littlebee, you had better order up only what baggage you need immediately, and then come out and take the air with me. I have something to say to you.

Littlebee. Thank you; I'll do so. I'll join you—say in half an hour.

[*Exit Glasser and Oreo.*]

Littlebee. This man Oreo seems friendly. I like him. But his odd apology for lying don't indicate a man of honor. However, it won't do in this country to judge a man too hastily. He is interesting, anyway. And this is the *best* room. Glad Dolly can't know where I am. Bless her little heart, she *shant* know. I'll drop her a line and make it all jolly. [*Opens his satchel and takes out writing materials.*]

[*End of Scene 3.*]

SCENE 4. A "street" in Rocky Dam. Oreo and Littlebee walking together.

Oreo. [*In a low, earnest tone.*] Will you pardon me, Mr. Littlebee, if I venture a word of caution to you while you are among miners in this part of the country?

Littlebee. Do you fear personal violence to me—or robbery?

Oreo. Not a bit of it. You are as safe among these men as among men milliners on Fourteenth street. No, I mean quite another thing.

Littlebee. What is it, pray?

Oreo. I fear you are about to suffer a painful, a terrible disappointment in your mine investment. I beg you not again to make any allusions to it, or to your intentions concerning it, in the presence of anybody here. Bear like a man what you may have to bear, and say nothing. That is all. You will find that I speak as a friend.

Littlebee. [*Looking searchingly at Oreo.*] Mr. Oreo, I don't understand what you mean; but believing you mean well to me, I will follow your advice.

Oreo. How came you to pay twenty thousand dollars for a mine you never saw?

Littlebee. A gentleman in New York, thoroughly familiar with mines and mining, to whom I was introduced by a wealthy broker, canvassed the

matter thoroughly with me, and after full investigation I was persuaded that it was a safe—an eminently safe investment.

Oreo. Yes. *Safe. Very safe.* Safe as a deposit in the great deep.

Littlebee. I hope you have no reason to impugn my friend's judgment or honesty.

Oreo. I have.

Littlebee. Do you know the Golconda mine?

Oreo. I do not. That is why I know you have been swindled. If there were such a mine in this region I would know it.

Littlebee. But, my dear sir, I have the abstract of title under the hand and seal of the recorder of this mining district. My friend was not so careless as not to be sure of the title. I have it with me. [*Shows it to Oreo*]

Oreo. This shows that there *is* such a mining *claim* as the Golconda on record. The *claim* exists. But what does it represent? If it were a mine in this region or even a prospect likely to become a mine, I should certainly have heard of it. I hate to assume the part of a bird of ill omen, but I have seen enough of you in our hard stage ride to like you. You were frank enough to let us know that you and your little wife cannot afford to lose large sums of money. I did not know, till you let it out at the bar, that you were the victim of a cruel swindle: gaily coming out as if to take possession of a fortune.

Littlebee. Say no more. I will see the property. My friend in New York told me any miner of the region would conduct me to it.

Oreo. Will you permit me to find it for you, and to go with you? I may prove a more discreet friend than any miner you may happen to pick up.

Littlebee. Certainly, Mr. Oreo; gladly. When can we go?

Oreo. To-morrow. I will this evening find where it lies, and we can quietly mount our horses to-morrow morning early, and go to it. Whatever you may find, carry a stiff upper lip, and let no one hereabouts again know what you are here for. I called you away from the bar to your room in order to stop further conversation about it in the presence of the crowd.

Littlebee. My God! Have I indeed been swindled? I cannot believe it.

Oreo. My friend, we are young. Time enough to lose and win many fortunes yet. You have made a bold sortie in business and met with a heavy loss. Draw in your pickets, close ranks, and fight it out. But don't advertise your position with fireworks.

[*Littlebee takes Oreo's both hands—presses them in silence.*]

[*End of Scene 4.*]

SCENE 5. At the prospect hole called Golconda Mine. An open cut in the rock, with no sign of any value.

Oreo. This is it. You will see the name and location notice on the stake.

Littlebee. [*Looks at claim notice, on location stake. Takes out his abstract of title and compares description on the stake with the abstract. Finds it the same.*] This is it. [*Stands stock still and silent with bowed head.*]

Orco. [*Puts his arm around Littlebee and walks him away.*] My good fellow, will you tell me who it was that sold you this?

Littlebee. Mr. Baitem, of the firm of Baitem & Stringem, Boreel building.

Orco. And who introduced you to them?

Littlebee. Mr. Weave, of the firm of Weave & Grab, bankers, Wall street.

Orco. [*With passionate indignation.*] Finished scoundrels! But one Tweed wore the stripes behind Blackwell's prison bars, though every *little* thief is dogged by the hounds of law and feels their teeth. But how few of these smooth villains ever feel the ragged edge of justice. Law digs a moat around the walled castles of these robbers who sit secure at their desks and hear the tick of the snares that fill with victims who know not how the snares are set, or how to punish the snarer. Hundreds of years ago feudal castles of robber barons were razed to the ground by their outraged victims. Now—more cunning grown, these wolves have become gentle foxes and burrow safely under the fold of the lambs—caressing them into holes where they are eaten. And what does the law do? The law frowns upon and punishes the poor fellow who seeks to question or jeopardize the rights of property in the fox's hole. But, Mr. Littlebee, this rav- ing don't help your case. What can I do for you?

Littlebee. Nothing. I'll start for home to-morrow, a sadder and wiser man. What else *can* I do?

Orco. Return with me to my cabin and I will think the matter over. We'll sleep on it, and to-morrow morning perhaps some plan can be suggested for something better than going back to be jeered at by those New York foxes. Don't go back to the saloon, or hotel, as they call it.

Littlebee. My God! I have no desire but to bury myself.

[*End of Scene 5.*]

SCENE 6. Mrs. Littlebee's rooms in New York. Dolly opening and reading Charles' first letter from Rocky Dam—handed her by maid.

Dolly. Letter from Charles! Oh thank heaven! [*observes post-mark,*] and he is at the end of his journey, *safe*. Dear fellow. [*Kisses letter, opens and reads.*]

ROCKY DAM HOTEL, }
Sunday Afternoon, June 1. }

My Darling Dolly. Safe and sound on the ground of Rocky Dam. Since I dropped thee a line from Blackfoot, I have been through purgatory via what is called a line of Concord coaches, over a lava and sage-brush desert to this rocky-wrinkle in the mountains. I wish I could tell you how pure and holy I have become after weathering purgatory! But, oh horrible dust of the old volcanic fires!—I am still half smothered in them. Until once again clean I don't feel worthy to touch the hem of thy garment,

my tidy, sweet little wife—even with a pen two thousand miles long. How you would laugh to see things here! Am in my private apartment. It is the end of the garret of an unbattoned barn with saloon below. I was shown through a passage in the centre of the garret between two rows of blankets spread on the floor for beds. This is called the *corral*. That is Spanish for cattle-pen. Your distinguished husband was assigned the guest's chamber, separated by a partition of sheeting from the common crowd. Think what a row of sleeping beauties I may have to walk through to-morrow morning! Have been in but five minutes, enjoy the oddity of everything. I made one acquaintance on the stage who is interesting, though blunt—Tom Oreo, they call him. Have made an appointment to meet him as soon as I can get out of the thick dust that I still feel buried in. You have no idea how queer things are here. It is the contrast with all things at home that makes it queer—and *jolly*:—like a discord on the fiddle, you know—that sets you to laughing. Mr. Oreo, has told me things that are very strange about mines. Of course I am not well enough acquainted to know how far to trust him, but he seems to me like a square, good fellow, and he talks like an educated man. When I told him about the mine I had bought here, and what I paid for it, he said my friends Mr. Baitem and Mr. Weave were swindlers. What foolish prejudices people get against people without knowing them! To-morrow we will ride out to the Golconda. Until I have seen it I shall feel uneasy, and I would give a hundred Golcondas to be once again at thy dear side. I am fearfully tired, love, and I know you will excuse this short letter. Good night, with a hug, and a hug, and a bushel of kisses.

Thy loving

CHARLES.

Dolly. [*Her face buried in her hands.*] Poor, dear Charles. [*Takes another letter and opens it.*]

MR. OREO'S CABIN, {
Monday Evening, June 2nd. }

My dear, dear wife. Have been to the mine with Mr. Oreo, and am dreadfully tired after a hard ride all day in the mountains. Have seen the Golconda and must say—*it is not a fortune*. But since I am here, and spent half of all our fortune on it, I *must*—I *must* Dolly, make it up in some way. Mr. Oreo has told me that hundreds of men sink all their money on mines here, but the best men, he says, if they stay and work and don't trust to others, will succeed. So you see my road to success is assured. But I must keep to the road. I WILL SUCCEED!

Sweet, darling Dolly—wont you help me?—and brace me up? I am so lonely without thee and yet you cannot come to such a place as this. Don't blame me for leaving thee. I must stay for some time to learn mining. Thy love is all my fortune and thy courage all my hope. God bless thee.

Thy loving

CHARLES.

P. S. I forgot to say that I have come by invitation of Mr. Oreo, to his

cabin, which is much decenter than the hotel—saloon, and he is kind as a brother to me since he has learned how I have been swindled. You ought to have heard his fiery indignation when he found it all out. You said you hated them—Baitem and Weave I mean—before I left New York. You and Mr. Oreo would make a good pair for that. He says they ought to be behind prison bars on Blackwell's Island. The revelation is all so sudden I cannot realize it yet. My head is dazed. To-morrow I will be strong. Mr. Oreo is to plan something for to-morrow. *Au revoir*, my beloved.

THY CHARLES.

[*Dolly bows her head with firm lip and tearless eyes, full of resolution :—then rises proudly and says :*]

Dolly. Yes, Charles ; my courage SHALL give thee hope !

[*End of Act II.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I. Oreo's cabin at Rocky Dam. Oreo, Littlebee, Mike Quartzeye, Chris. Pickit.

Oreo. This, Mr. Littlebee, is our country residence. I have insisted on your coming here for good reasons and wont hear to anything else. I have never before asked a man to bunk with me since I have been in this savage country. I havn't found one to my liking. I like you. If you don't like me you'll soon find it out, and I'll like you the better for having the frankness to say so.

Littlebee. But, my good man, I've nothing to do here. What *can* I do ? Thanks for your kind offer ; but I cannot stay. I must go back to my little wife ; tell her all, and find something to do to earn our bread. My God ! how I have been fooled !

Oreo. Who hasn't ? We are all fools ! Brilliant fools or stupid ones. brutal fools and foxy fools, lazy fools or over-worked fools, lucky fools and unlucky—but the poorest fool of all is the man that don't fight harder after the first knock-down. I tell you, Littlebee, you've got more good stuff in you than you'll ever know if you don't fight it out on this line—if it takes all summer.

Littlebee. Oh if it were not for my poor little wife, I might stay and try. try, try *something*.

Oreo. Don't imagine because she's a woman that she'll wilt. You've let out enough of your happy love without knowing you were talking of her to make me know that she's good stuff. Show the iron that's in you. and she'll put an edge of steel on it. Stay here, test her metal, work with me for one year, strike for fortune in these mountains and she will match

your work with a resolution that will make your later years far happier than if you now return to New York to be pointed at as the dupe of those city thieves. I've settled it! There's your bed! We board outside!

Littlebee. But what can I do.

Orco. I'll tell you. First, as you let the cat out of the bag yesterday at the bar, there's no use trying to conceal from the miners that you've been "sold." These miners "have all been there,"—all lambs that somebody has sheared—but they have stopped bleating. They'll have a fellow-feeling for you when they know you've been cut close. I'll see that it turns to your advantage. I've arranged that you go prospecting with two as good miners as carry the pick. They'll be truer friends than your Wall street men. You'll learn more in a month than you'll ever want to forget. Nothing venture, nothing have. If you don't find a fortune, you won't lose one. It will cost you nothing and will bring you health, hope, and something to talk with Dolly about more cheerful than what you have to go home on now. Are you sure of doing better in New York?

Littlebee. No. Only love makes me a coward.

Orco. It will make your wife brave.

Littlebee. I'll do as you advise. But, oh how happy we were—we *were*.

Orco. "The purest streams of human love
Flow naturally—never!
But gush by pressure from above
With God's hand on the lever.
The first are turbidest and meanest;
The last are sweetest and serenest."

It is the cold stream born in the granite hills that flows on to sparkle in vales of Avocha. Here are my men.

[*Enter Mike Quartzeye and Chris. Pickit.*]

Mr. Littlebee—Mike Quartzeye—Chris. Pickit. Boys, I know you'll like each other. Better start this afternoon and make camp early. Littlebee, you'll take my blankets. The boys know you're a tender-foot. Don't pretend to anything else.

Mike Quartzeye. 'Av n't ye never camped?

Littlebee. No. But I can. I'm awfully healthy.

Chris. You'll do. A fellow don't know what he's made fer ef he has n't bunked on the pine leaves.

Mike Quartzeye. Dam'd h'if h'I can sleep h'if h'I don't feel the rock h'un-der me.

Orco. Mike! don't swear any more than necessary. My friend is a little tender in the ears yet. Bottle it up till you strike a mine.

Mike Quartzeye. By G—d [*swallows it*], h'I'll swallow h'em, Colonel, h'if h'it makes me sick h'at the stomik.

Littlebee. What shall I need to carry? I've got a shot-gun breech-loader, and a Smith & Wesson. I've never fired 'em, but I know which end is which. I can hit a mountain if you'll set it up.

Chris. Bully. You shake up the mountains—and I'll bag the game.

Oreo. Leave the pistol in your trunk. It will make the store clothes feel safe and save Dolly's husband from an early tomb. By the way, the first thing you want is a suit of miner's overalls. Get out of your woollen dust catchers and into these things (*looking at his own*) as soon as possible. One change of flannels is all you want. Your English walking shoes are all right. Chris. will roll your flannels in an ore sack to go in the "Pack." Be ready in half an hour. I have a horse for you.

Littlebee. You dispose of me as if I were your boy. It's all right. I'll be ready. [*Exit.*]

Oreo. There, boys, goes a square, honest young fellow whose father left him well off, but not a snob or a fool. He's just married and no sooner married than he falls into the hands of these Wall street mine sharks in New York, and they sold him a mine. You know what it is. Half his fortune he's been robbed of. The other half is 'nt enough for that young couple to live on in New York. I like the boy. You'll like him. I'll give my summer to set him up again. I've grub-staked you, but if you strike anything good, my half is his. Treat him like a gentleman, but make him a miner as fast as you can. A tender-foot sometimes brings luck. But, luck or no luck, remember he's my friend.

Chris. Tom Oreo, nuff-sed. Ye started us and we aint goin' to forget it.

Mike. 'Ell h'and damnation, Tom, w'at d'ye want to talk so much fur? W'en we seed ye shar' yer bunk wi' 'im didn't we know more 'n ye could tell h'us? P'raps we'll shake 'is varnish h'off, but h'old Mike'll tak' a rattle-snake h'in 'is 'and h'afore h'a scratch'll cum to Tom h'Oreo's friend.

Oreo. All right, boys, Here's to luck. [*Pours out whiskey.*] Not another till you come back. Remember! [*Puts away liquor.*]

[*Three saddle-horses and two pack-horses to appear at the cabin ready to go.*
Chris. tightens all the sinches.]

Littlebee. [*Returning.*] Well, here I am. [*In miner's rig complete.*]

Oreo. Now, my boy, you're ready for war. Work yourself cheerful, but do n't strike a bonanza hard enough to break it. Now let's see you mount. All right. Good luck to you. I'll meet you here between the first and fourth of July. [*To the others.*] Now boys leave your country for your country's good. Good bye! Good bye! When Littlebee shakes the mountains with his shot-gun, look out for the quartz.

SCENE 2. Camp in pine trees in narrow level between high timbered mountains, near a brook. Mike and Chris. undoing "pack" from mules—getting out the kitchen, provisions and blankets. Littlebee making a fire. Mike Quartzeye leads animals away to hobble them.

Littlebee. Well, this *is* a beauty-spot.

Chris. T'aint sage-brush desert—not much. Startin' a fire, eh? Fire's sometimes good when thar's cookin' to do. Can ye make her so she'll catch?

Littlebee. Well, I suppose I can stick kindlings together and strike a match.

Chris. Larnt that in college, didn't ye? Look out thar. Don't pile in too much till cookin' 's done. A fellow that 's cookin' don't want to be cooked. Miners don't like to spile thar complexions.

Littlebee. Well, how 's that for high?

Chris. That 'll do. Now fill this down to the creek, an' we 'll soon have things sizzlin'. [*Chris gets out flour, baking-powder, bacon, etc., while Littlebee is gone for water.*]

Littlebee. Here 's your water. [*Drinks out of the pail.*] Good gracious! how sweet it is.

Chris. Now, while I 'm makin' the bread, spose'n you take that ar hatchet and cut a lot of pine truck.

Littlebee. What 's pine truck?

Chris. Whar 's yer college larnin'? Cut a lot o' them little pine branches an' make a bed of 'em. [*Littlebee goes to cut and Chris mixes flour and water and baking-powder and puts them in the "dutch oven" on the fire, then cuts bacon, puts it aside and goes where Littlebee is cutting twigs, takes the hatchet and slashes down more in a moment than all Littlebee had cut.*] There, now, lay 'em down—butts this way—so. [*Goes back to put on the bacon. Littlebee goes on with the bed making.*]

Littlebee. What 's the difference which way the butts go?

Chris. I 'll show ye when the bacon 's on. [*Puts it on and then goes back to Littlebee.*] Hallo! that would n't be any better than a feather-bed. Here, le' me show ye. [*Makes a deep thatch while Littlebee watches.*] There, now; ken ye finish it?

Littlebee. I 'll try.

Mike. [*Returning from the animals.*] The 'osses h'is snuffin' 'roun' like h'as h'if they smelled b'ar.

Littlebee. Do you have bears this near?

Mike. H'if they don't 'ave h'us fust. B'ar likes pigs h'an' things that 's mixed h'up with folks, ye know. H'it 's h'a dam' purty place fur a b'ar walk, this h'is; h'and h'if one h'of them cinnamon 's takin' a constitutional, h'its not me that 's got the bad manners to spile h'it; but h'if they 's comin' fur bacon 'fore we h'eat h'it Cap'n, you 'll 'ave to show 'em the door.

Littlebee. If one should come, what would you do?

Mike. Cap'n, that 's too 'ard fur me. H'I wouldn't want to see you 'ugged. H'I 'd be jealous. But h'if 'e set to chawin' yer, I could n't forgive 'im—an' h'I 'd go fur 'im,

Littlebee. How would you go for him?

[*All squatting around the fire for supper and helping themselves as they talk—breaking the hot bread as it comes from the oven.*]

Mike. H'I 'd get h'off with the rifle h'an' h'I 'd plug 'im, h'an' pr'aps 'e 'd drop you, h'an' then Chris 'ud go fur 'im with the h'ax; h'an' h'I 'd plug 'im ag'in, h'an' 'e 'd peel Chris h'an' pr'aps h'I 'd settle 'im with h'another lead; pr'aps 'e would n't settle. B'ar 's h'onsartin.

Littlebee. Pleasant. [*Eating heartily.*]

Chris. That 'll do Mike. I tell ye Cap. ef ever the bar smells Mike, that 'll let me an' you out; an' the b'ar wo n't go to town fur pig that night.

Mike. Yes, 'e'd know you're too tough fur h'any good use, h'an' 'e'd jes' break ye h'up h'a little, h'an' fin' ye wan't wuth h'eatin'; but the Cap'n 'ere, the b'ar likes them tender city chaps.

Chris. Why, Cap., if the bar should come, Mike 'ud be so scared he 'd tumble into the fire, an' the b'ar 'ud wait fur him to cook, while you an' me, Cap'n. Cap'n, w'at 'ud we do?

Littlebee. My legs are so short, Chris., I don't know what I could do. Guess I'd wait and see how the bear liked Mike. If the bear filled up on Mike, we might compromise with the beast and let him have Mike if he 'd let us go.

Mike. Pard, ye don't know b'ars. Then h'an' me 's good friends. W'en h'I goes h'out to thar camp, h'I takes the best they's got, h'if they 's h'out. W'en they comes to my camp, they takes the best h'I 's got, fur then h'I 's h'out. H'it 's allers good manners with b'ars to be h'outside w'en they 's h'inside.

Littlebee. But in earnest; I've always heard that bears hug and strike, but never go for men to eat. How is it, Chris.?

Chris. The fact is, bars is like us. You've got to know each b'ar. Once in a while, thar 's a man that 'll kill to rob ye, but they 're not comin' along frequent. So with b'ars. Then again, thar 's men that 'll shoot if ye 're showin' yer pistol who wouldn't raise a hand agin ye ef ye didn't show the hurtin' tools fust. Jes' so with b'ars. Now, ef ye're goin' to study b'ars, ye want to begin with a quaker b'ar. But the cussid beasts hasn't any directory to show you whar you want to go for them you wants to see. Thar 's the trouble. I don't think b'ars ever come fur a feller just to eat him, but when they hurt him bad so his light goes out they won't see him spile. But don't be scared Cap'n, Mike 's a bully b'ar hunter and knows how to let 'em alone. I've got a rifle that 'll settle 'em if they 'll only set fur their picters, and that little shot-gun of your 'n if you can plug him in the eyes is as good as a gatlin' gun. The main thing a man wants when he 's studyin' b'ars is—distance.

Littlebee. Yes—perspective.

Chris. Now, Mr. Littlebee let 's finish that bed o' yourn. You want a bolster, and a foot board.

Littlebee. Yes. Where are they? Are you going to get them off the trees, too?

Chris. Of course. [*Mike goes out with an ax and brings back with him two logs—one for head and one for foot and stakes them in place, then arranges the pine boughs over them.*]

Mike. Ther' now! Chuck h'in yer pine; bring yer blankets.

Littlebee. Here they are. [*Chris. and Littlebee spread them.*] That is a bed fit for a king, [*caressing the elastic cushion it makes,*] soft as down, and fragrant as a rose bed.

Chris. Now turn in Cap'n, an' I'll show you the miner's tuck.

[*Littlebee takes off coat and boots and throws himself upon it.*]

Littlebee. Here goes.

Chris. Stretch out. Now h'ist yer feet quick, an' catch the blankits under 'em. [*Littlebee does so and don't tuck.*] That has the appurage of a failyer. Git up! Le' me show yer. [*Gets in and makes the tuck flap.*] Thar now! Yer git in ag'in. [*Littlebee gets in and makes it perfectly; then Chris, tucks the blankets all around him and gives him a little pillow Oreo has had put in for him.*] Here's the Cunnel's piller. Now Cap'n, dream on yer sweetheart. We'll call ye when breakfast is ready.

Littlebee. But where's *your* bed, and *Mike's*?

Chris. Bless yer soul, we don't bother fer a bed w'en the groun' 's soft as this. It's devilish cold up here o'nights an' we do roll in among the blankits as if they wur our gals, but groun' 's good 'nough fer us ter settle our old bones on. Good night. [*Mike has spread blankets for the two and turns in.*]

Mike. Good night, Cap'n. Don't wait fur the h'angels 'arp h'in the 'ills. Go ter sleep, h'and ther b'ars 'l be yer guardian h'angels.

Littlebee. Good night, all.

SCENE 3. Littlebee, Chris, and Mike, back in Oreo's cabin at Rocky Dam. Littlebee sits dejected, with a pile of letters from his wife, looking at dates to get the latest first. Tears and reads.

Littlebee. I must know first if she thinks I have deserted her. [*Reads:*] Oh, my darling Charles! What has become of you? Twice I have packed to start to find you, fearing something terrible has happened. The first time, brother Jo. brought in a gentleman who had been out in that savage country. He told me how safe it is; and when gone on a prospecting tour there is no possibility for weeks and months to get letters or to send them, and that if I could see you in the mountains I would find you as fat and happy as a forest king. But the last time I was about to start I had dreamed two nights that the Indians were following you and that a huge bear was in front of you, just going to hug you to death. It was too awful. I was all ready to take the train West when I got a letter from Mr. Thomas Oreo, your friend, telling that he had heard from you up in the mountains and that you were enjoying roughing it, but almost crazy to hear from me. He said he could find no way to get my letters to you until your return; that there were no Indians in that part of the country and that the bears at this season never hurt anybody. And he said such pleasant things about you in his short sort of way, that I kissed the letter as if it were from you, Charley, and said to my poor heart—patience, patience. Oh, Charley, don't stay a day longer in that horrid country after you get back to Rocky Dam. What can you do there? Come back to your little Dolly. My heart chokes when I think of what may happen.

I cannot write more now. Dear, dear Charles come home. I cannot live without thee.

Thy own

DOLLY.

Littlebee. Yes, Dolly, (*kissing the letter.*) I will go back to thee—sweet, sweet little wife. True enough—what can I do here? I have been a month in the mountains, chasing the prospecters will-o'-the-wisp that leads now here, now there, where snows crest the mountain ridges and night winds sweep with chilly breath; where the hot sun blisters the shaley steep that must be climbed with panting heart and aching bones, to know if "*signs of mineral*" will lead to the promised mine! Day by day, week by week, month after month—for a life time perhaps—who knows?—the weary chase may continue. * * * A month out! Result, *nothing!* Mother and brothers in one—Mike and Chris. have been to me. *That* I have to thank human nature for. Yes, and thankful that I am strong and healthy as a young buck. I suppose I must say that I have learned something. I certainly know now what a consummate ass I was to think before I ever saw a mine that I knew something about mining. * * * Whew! but what an appetite I've got! And sleep? Why, I never knew before how much a man can get in 'tween dark and dawn, breathing an air so crisp and pure on the mountain tops that it seems as if each time he opens his eyes he sees for the first time the glories of the world. But I must write Dolly, even if I get there by the same train that takes the letter. [*Opens another letter containing her photograph, kisses it, and gets out writing-materials.*]

Chris. [*Entering.*] Well, Cap'n, how's yer daisy? All well at the ranche?

Littlebee. Yes, Chris.,—would you like to see her?

Chris. Wa—l, yes—see'n yous no objection. [*Looks at picture.*] Good gracious!!—Is she your wife? [*Littlebee nods assent.*] And you've been to heaven and seen HER—and then comes out here? Hell! What a man you are!

Mike. Le' me see h't. [*Gazes as if he would drink it in, then looks at Littlebee, then at the picture and exclaims:*] Lord!—That h'aint your wife, h'is h't? [*Littlebee nods.*] Je—rusalum! H'an' she's livin'? [*Littlebee.* Yes.] H'an' you come away h'an' left 'er fer h'other fellers ter look h'at? [*Littlebee looks glum.*] Lord! h'I couldn't h'a done h't.

Littlebee. If the sight of her makes you almost swear, I'm sorry I let you see it. Boys, I'm going back to Dolly to-morrow morning, but for fear I may get lost, I'm going to write to her first.

Mike. H'an' she h'understan's common writin'? H'I wouldn't a thunk h't.

Littlebee. Yes, Mike, and you'd like her.

Mike. Lord—Cap'n!—h'I'd 'af to be w'itened 'fore letin' her see me. [*Goes out in a brown study.*]

Littlebee. So Tom Oreo has been writing my wife to relieve her anxiety. Thoughtful of him—a lucky thought too. By this time she would have been at Hell-hole. I shudder to think of her coming out here. No, no,

no ! Oh Fate ! It shan't come to that. [*Calls Chris.*] Chris., didn't Col. Oreo say he would meet us here at this time ? I don't want to go home without seeing him.

Oreo. [*Coming in with a surge.*] Glad to hear it my boy ! How are you ? No need of asking. Rugged as a buck. Do you speak English yet ?

Littlebee. Why do you ask ?

Oreo. Because when a man has been a long time among the tribes of I-done-its and I-seen-its—he's apt to forget his own lingo.

Littlebee. Perhaps *I have not seen* those tribes !

Oreo. You'll pass ! * * Mike tells me you've had no luck this trip. You've met "the common fate of all ; into each life some rain must fall—some days must be dark and dreary." But I've got some sunshine for you. My other prospectors have got something. I have been over to examine their finds. They are more than good ; and I'm going to take you over there and leave you there.

Littlebee. Impossible. I leave to-morrow morning to join my wife. She cannot live without me nor I without her. *I must go.*

Oreo. You don't look emaciated—or melancholy—or insane ! Isn't that your wife's miniature there ?

Littlebee. Yes, I have just got it.

Oreo. May I see it ?

Littlebee. Certainly.

Oreo. [*Looking at it and then grasping Littlebee's hand.*] Ah, my young friend, you *ought* to be a little insane for home with such an angel face as that in it. But you must not go home yet. Your wife looks the picture of health.

Littlebee. And is as healthy as she looks.

Oreo. Then she will have the healthy courage of love and faith in you ! Why, my boy, she'll grow strong in heart and body waiting for you in New York, as you will fighting for fortune in Idaho. In the old days of the crusades, Knights left their lady-loves—not for a month—but for years ; not to face hardships merely—but wounds, pestilence, famine, death ! Which do you think the fair ones loved most—those who went out or those who staid home ? You too, are a crusader. Will you pay your wife the poor compliment to suppose that she will not spare you one year where there is no unusual danger, when your needs compel you to work *somewhere* ? Only let her see there is need of it, and she will no longer make you weak by calling you home from the fight just as the battle begins. You are her knight. Ask her if she wants you to desert the month after you have enlisted ?

Littlebee. Mr. Oreo, I hardly know whether you are more cruel or friendly. You shake my resolution.

Oreo. A resolution to retreat after the first skirmish, *ought* to be broken. Let me show you a letter I've got from your wife, and then say if you will stay or go. I'll read it to you.

Mr. Thomas Oreo.—Your very considerate letter relieving the

agony of my suspense concerning my dear husband is received. I was already to start to seek him, foreboding some great calamity. Though you are an entire stranger to me, what my dear Charley has written of you, and your letters make me feel that you, at least, will not deceive him or me. You write that the investment into which he was persuaded by New York men, proved a swindle; and that it was so shameful that you desire while he is out in the mining country that he may retrieve it by sacrificing comforts and home for a brief season, and giving his whole energy to find something that may make up for his loss. Charles wrote me cheerfully and did not tell me he had been deceived, but I *knew* it in my heart as soon as I had the letter. If I were only with him to share his hardships and to soften his disappointment, I would be content. You suggest, though you do not say, that that is impracticable—that men *must* go alone in that country. If it is really best that he should leave me for the whole season I will submit, but oh Mr. Oreo, you do not know what it costs me. I cannot write him so. Be father and brother to him and I will pray every night to God to bless you and him as I do now. With grateful regard,

Yours truly,

AMELIA LITTLEBEE.

There! my son and brother, don't you see how the brave little woman wants you to face the battle notwithstanding her heart says come home?

Littlebee. I do. But if after all, we are unsuccessful? I have seen enough to know that where one strikes wealth, a thousand are dragged by hope to premature age, and miserable poverty.

Oreo. And do you know what proportion of those who struggle in the great city "strike it rich" as the miners say? Is it any greater? Is the rugged health of the hills no blessing? Is economy of living in these wilds no advantage? Is the mortification of search for clerkly hire among your old acquaintance no spur to a short battle for independence here? And even if you fail to find a reward in money will you not return a stronger and a prouder man with an experience worth something when you do return?

Littlebee. Perhaps. Oh, my friend, I can fight it out here *with you*—but alone I could not. The conceit is all taken out of me.

Oreo. That's a good beginning. Now write to your wife—and then—off for the mines, and a new campaign.

Littlebee. When?

Oreo. Early to-morrow morning. I must make arrangements for the pack-train, and will be back at bedtime. [*Exit.*]

Littlebee. [*Head buried in his hands.*]

[*End of Scene 3.*]

SCENE 4. New York. Mrs. Littlebee with a spinster aunt, in smaller and plainer quarters, reading Charles' letters written after his second start mine hunting; reads first to herself and then to her aunt.

Aunt. Well, Dolly dear, what is the news from Charles?

Dolly. Oh, Aunty! He seems farther off than ever. But he writes in good spirits. I really think he *is* in good spirits this time, and not writing as he did at first, just to keep me from breaking down. Just hear how he starts off—dating his letter up on the mountain.

HIGH-UP, ALL ROCK, BIG HOPE! }
August 20, 1880. }

My Precious Darling: The first chance for weeks offers to get a letter to you, and I feel as though I were a thousand miles on my way to your arms, at the very idea. God bless you. How are you? And how am I you want to know. Well, desperately healthy, as Willis said. Like a Viking bold, I stalk in top boots and would feel myself the biggest and strongest man in the world if it were not that all the fellows around me are much bigger and stronger. But you will want to know something more and better than what a big barbarian I've grown to be. Well, first, Tom Ore's mine that we came out to a month ago really promises to be something worth having. We are not only liable at any moment to strike it rich, as superintendents report when they hav'n't got anything in sight, but we are actually piling up some ore—neither very rich nor very poor, Ore says; but as Malvolio says when he gets the sword thrust—"tis enough"—enough to keep up to our ears in the pleasures of hope. Up to our ears did I say? If you were to see me at this moment—rubber boots up to hip, oil-cloth slouch hat and overalls covered with mud from the pit—if you weren't my own Dolly, you'd go back on me and vow that dirty rough is not your husband; and that he has not only been up to his ears in the pleasures of hope, but over his head in the mud of ages. No matter if he is—his heart is clean and full of gratitude every day that he has a Dolly to love and dream of and work for. Oh, if I had but that twenty thousand dollars I was fooled out of by those Wall street sharps, to work this mine, I'd soon show 'em my revenge. But I hav'n't and Tom is as poor as I am—yes, a great deal poorer in money; but then, as he says, he hasn't anybody but himself to provide for, and all he has he is staking on this mine. He don't say anything about it, but I really think he is putting his very blood into it, more to bring me out right than on his own account. He is moving with dogged energy to get work along with just the least money that will do. He often looks wearied and worried, and I think is fearful that we can't develop the mine without more money than we have. He smiles pleasantly to see me hopeful and encourages me to be so, but when he does not know that I am observing him, he has a look of stubborn determination, as though he thought the worst still ahead. Developing a mine he says is just the reverse of building a pyramid. You begin at the top with a simple square hole, but as you go down it widens on every side and

with perpetual increase of cost. But never fear, we'll make it a success. But, enough of this. I'm dying to know how you get on and how the little heir [*Dolly is enceinte,*] progresses. [*Blushes and stops reading.*]

Aunt. Never mind, darling; [*Kisses her.*] I know what he is thinking of. Don't worry. *He* is well. *You* are well. We'll all be happy yet. There, there! don't cry.

Dolly. [*Drying her eyes.*] Here aunty— here 's a letter from Mr. Oreo— won't you read it to me, please?

Aunt. [*Takes it and reads.*] My dear Mrs. Littlebee: I can't let the chance go by to tell you how well and strong and energetic and hopeful your husband is. We have a mine. Patience and work, work and patience—we must have to make it a success. Our means are small and the work is great, but if we continue to be strengthened by your hope and faith in us, *we will succeed.* I have no wife nor mother, sister, brother or friend to care for and my heart and hope is all with your husband and you. It may be a long and weary road that we have entered on, but if we all pull together, *we will succeed.* Before the deep snows fall, Charles shall be back to you. We will have stores of provisions to last five months that we may be snowed in, and I will remain with the men. May God bless you and yours.

THOMAS OREO.

Aunt and Dolly. [*Together.*] *He is a friend.*

Dolly. Oh! he is no false man. I *love* him.

[*End of Act III.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Paris—fifteen years after the preceding act. Mr. and Mrs. Littlebee in parlors of Hotel L'Athene, with their two daughters—Oriette, age fourteen, and Tommie, (a girl,) age seven. Mr. and Mrs. Littlebee both grown stout. Oreo a little gray, but otherwise unchanged.

[*Persons—Mr. and Mrs. Littlebee, Oriette and Tommie Littlebee, French maid Marie, Mr. Oreo, Mr. James Also.*]

[*A servant brings Mr. Oreo's card.*]

Littlebee. Tom Oreo!! Good! Good!! Always on hand at the right time.

Mrs. Littlebee. Yes, indeed! Dear old fellow! Show him right up.

Littlebee. He is better to see than all the sights of Europe.

Mrs. Littlebee. I was so afraid he might not come on time.

[*Enter Oreo. Littlebee and Oreo embracing heartily, and Mrs. Littlebee taking both his hands in hers with impulsive welcome.*]

Littlebee. Welcome once again and forever.

Mrs. Littlebee. And doubly welcome so far from home.

Oreo. Well!—I rather think I *am* at home.

Mrs. Littlebee. Indeed you *are*!—and you've come to stay with us?

Oreo. This evening, certainly.

Littlebee. No, no, no! more than that:—you must take one of our apartments right here.

Oreo. We'll talk of that bye and bye:—let's sit down and say how d'ye do, first. Where's Oriette and Tommie?

Mrs. Littlebee. Marie; go tell the girls Mr. Oreo is here.

Littlebee. Here, old fellow, take this foot-oil (*fautuil*,) as they call it here.

Mrs. Littlebee. [*Laughing heartily*] Oh, dear! Mr. Oreo, Charley's French is killing! He knows it *so* well, and yet he does make it so funny.

[*Tommie, the youngest girl, comes bouncing in and springs to Oreo's lap, kissing him heartily. Oriette advances shyly.*]

Oreo. The same impulsive little Tommie. [*Kissing her.*] But who is this tall little maiden? [*Rises and kisses her respectfully on the forehead.*] How you have *grown* in only these two years since I saw you! Is this indeed the baby I tossed on my knee in New York those sad years when we wrestled with that obstinate mine for our fortunes? *But we won, didn't we?* [*Tossing his head proudly and comically to Mr. and Mrs. Littlebee.*] How the years fly! And this my little God-child, my Oriette! who showed me her dolls only so little while ago?—and [*sadly*—so soon to be too tall to be caressed by her God-papa?

Oriette. [*Archly.*] I don't know that growing tall makes my love for you any shorter, Mr. Oreo.

Oreo. [*All laughing.*] That's true! The taller you grow, the longer you'll love me,—is that it? But you are very slender—will the love be slender too?

Tommie. I'll be your fat love, and sis'll come in after me: won't she, Uncle Tom?

Littlebee. Between them they will make it all right. Their love will be as broad as it is long.

Mrs. Littlebee. [*To Oriette.*] Sit down, my dear, and let us hear Mr. Oreo tell us all about himself. [*To Oreo.*] You once told us you were born in Paris. Have you relations here?

Oreo. No, not one. My family were New Yorkers, travelling. I was with them, mostly here, till I was ten; returned then to the States to schools and to college, and when I graduated, had money to travel—and travelled.

Mrs. Littlebee. How long were you travelling? I suppose you saw everything.

Oreo. Oh yes, for two years I went the rounds of everything to get rid of money—swell hotels—in “society,” [*sneeringly*] as our folks call it—gambling, girls, and galleries. A young man makes a precious mess of it. I did. Learned everything I had no need to know—and learned nothing else. I took to the languages here as I did to the soup and the wines—like them all—like the French people too. If there is more humbug in their palaver than with us, there is less in their lives. They moralize less than our people, but they treat each other better. And how do *you* like Paris?

Mrs. Littlebee. Oh, splendid! Such shops! such shops! such shops!

Littlebee. And chops—such chops! such chops! such chops!

Mrs. Littlebee. [*Springing up to box Mr. Littlebee's ears—who jumps up and lodges.*] You impertinent man!

Oreo. Alas, that I should witness a family quarrel in this house! I shall feel safer with an apartment at a distance! But outside of shops and chops, how does Paris strike you?

Littlebee. Magnificent! But the subject is too big for me. We did the long gallery yesterday. Never was so tired before. If I were a corner-sir, as my wife says—

Mrs. Littlebee. [*Laughing.*] Connoisseur! you mean.

Littlebee. Well, as I was saying, if I were a corner-sir, I'd pray the Lord to turn me into a blacksmith if ever again I let 'em get a corner on me in that place.

Oreo. Did you ever study Greek?

Littlebee. Yes.

Oreo. Did you try to take it all in—Alpha to Omega—its history, philosophy, eloquence and art—all in one day?

Littlebee. Don't make fun of me. It always made me sick to go into old furniture museums. I did try to make myself believe, in New York, after I got a little money to spare, that I was fond of Ah-t (art,) but it's about as I'm fond of the sea—till I get on it. But I tell you, Dolly is way up. She gives me more than there is in the guide-book, and when I'm looking at some fine woman on the floor, she's sure to call my attention to a madona on the wall—as if I had any use for more than one, after living with her so long—and so pleasantly.

Mrs. Littlebee. Stop your nonsense, and let's hear from Mr. Oreo—what he has seen and done since we last met.

Oreo. Well, to begin with, I met a man to-day in Paris who I think you have forgotten, but who has n't forgotten Mr. Littlebee, or Messrs Baitem & Stringem.

Littlebee. I can't think who it is.

Oreo. Do you remember Jim Also, the honest miner who sold you the Golconda—through the offices of Messrs Weave and Baitem & Stringem?

Littlebee. Jim Also!—surely, *he* is n't in Paris?

Oreo. Yes—large as life, and growing!

Littlebee. Well, well, well! who next? What luck has brought him here?

Oreo. You know how you paid Baitem twenty thousand dollars for the mine? And how Jim Also sold it to Stringem for one thousand dollars an hour before! But he did n't pay the thousand dollars, you know, till after he got your twenty. Then Stringem took Also to the theatre, and—

Marie. Pardon, Monsieur—Madame, a gentleman want to zee Meestair Lee-tail-bee. [*Hands card.*]

Littlebee. MR. JAMES ALSO!! Show him up, Marie.

Oreo. This is more interesting than any story.

Mrs. Littlebee. But what kind of a man is he?

Littlebee. We'll soon see. [*Littlebee goes to the door to meet Also.*]

Jim Also. Mr. Littlebee?

Littlebee. Yes, sir.

Also. Hope I have not intruded by calling at your private rooms. I hope you will excuse me:—I have had a great desire to see you once again—having heard much of you—out at the mines—since we met for an hour, once.

Littlebee. Sixteen years ago, I believe.

Also. Yes, sir.

Littlebee. At the office of Baitem & Stringem?

Also. Exactly.

Littlebee. Mr. Oreo — Mr. Also.

Also. Ah! Mr. Oreo! I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Oreo, already.

Oreo. I was just mentioning it as your card came up.

Also. Not an unfriendly mention, I hope.

Oreo. Had only got to the name, sir.

Littlebee. My wife, Mrs. Littlebee — Mr. Also — and my daughters. Have a chair.

Also. Thank you. It quite sets me up to find myself in such a circle of home-folks. It's awfully lonely in this great bedlum, and it's good as new gold-diggings to see American folks that make it look like home here.

Littlebee. Glad to give you the pleasure. And how has the world treated you since we met?

Also. For the most part, pretty rough: shaved me so thin most of the time that the game has n't been worth the candle. Fried bacon, gravel bedding and blossom rock that did n't assay, empty pocket, empty stomach:—a dead-beat with glorious expectations for fourteen years, and "a ten-strike" at last: that's all.

Littlebee. And the money you got for the Golconda?

Also. Oh, that lasted only one night. In fact, come to think, I never saw it at all! Stringem went to the theatre with me the very night when his noble-looking partner, Mr. Baitem, was so friendly as to permit you to become the purchaser of the Golconda. I never knew till years afterward what you paid for it. But I remember very well that night after the theatre, how Stringem, over a hot supper and champagne, let me into some of the secrets of the stock-board. He gave me points and told me just how to play 'em. He was about to invest ten thousand dollars on the same racket. I gave him my one-thousand-dollar check to put with his. I didn't see the color of the money afterwards. After waiting a few days, the good Mr. Stringem, with tears in his voice, informed me that he had lost all—his own ten thousand dollars gone and my one thousand dollars with it. I felt so sorry for him, that I didn't mind my little thousand, and told him to brace up—treated him—borrowed a dollar of him to pay treat; and then the kind soul, after all his misfortune, lent me money to get back to the hills. It was not till long afterwards that it dawned on me how he had run me through his hopper.

Littlebee. But were you not in league with him to sell me the mine and to swindle me?

Also. Not much: not as you think it. I came back from the Rockies that time with a few hundred dollars saved from good wages paid in them days, to spend the winter with the old folks in Connecticut. Some of the boys at the mines told me to sell some of their claims for 'em, if I could—for anything they'd fetch. The district I came from had been blown some in the city, and when I came down to the city, some of those broker-chaps were mighty curious to hear about my mines. Stringem was one of 'em. I showed him certified records of the claims and offered him the Golconda for fifty dollars. "Why," said he, "you would n't be such a fool as to sell a bona-fide mining claim in that district for fifty dollars, would you?—when you can just as well get a thousand?—and the mine liable to be a bonanza?" It did make me feel as though I had set her up rather cheap. Then he said—"Just keep your mouth shut about price and I'll get you a thousand dollars for that claim." It was so good of him, you know, to take such an interest in me, and it made me so kind o' rich all over, to think of the money I could take out to the boys for their divy: so I told Stringem if he could make such a raise as that, I'd give him half. But he repelled the proposition indignantly—clapped me on the shoulder in his friendly way, and says, "Old boy, I would n't take a dollar of it from you. I'll get you a thousand dollars or nothing. Only you tell all you know good about the country and the mine, when I ask you, and keep that bit of ore you showed me. You're sure it came from that district?" said he. I told him I was, and more than that, it was found on the very mountain where the Golconda claim was. "That's enough," said he. Then he brought you in and asked more questions:—if I knew where the Golconda mine was?—if that was n't the same district where the great Silver-king mine was? It was. If it was n't in the same rock,—the same kind of fissure—a *true fissure*—and then if I had any sample of the ore from that mountain where the Golconda was located? I showed you the ore. He then asked me if any claims in that mountain was n't *liable* to strike it rich—like the Silver-king, for instance. Of course, I said—what's to hinder? Now, Mr. Littlebee, that ore was found on that mountain. I don't know who left it there. I did n't lie, and I had no idea then, that I was helpin' those fellows to steal from you any more'n from me, tho' I can see how it looked mighty like it to you.

Oreo. Ha, ha, ha! two pretty lambs you were! Lamb of the mountains, and lamb of the cockney fold!!—well met in Baitem's pasture! And Stringem sheared you both in the same pen! [*Laughs aloud.*]

Littlebee. Let those laugh who win.

Also. So say I, Cap'n.

Oreo. Or, as the French say, those laugh best who laugh last.

Also. I met Stringem in New York the other day. His nose was blossoming, and his clothes hung loose on him—in fact he looked flabby and shabby and hungry. He was hanging around a restaurant in Broad street

with such a hungry look on him that I slipped a dollar in his hand and told him to fill up and cheer up. He looked surprised. He seemed to kind o' think he knew me, but I left him before he could place me. I saw by his look that it wasn't the first hand money he'd taken—like as a hungry dog takes a bone, and said to myself, as Mr. Littlebee says, let them laugh that wins.

Littlebee. [*Jumping up and taking Also by the hand.*] Well, well, well; old miner! I never imagined you too were a victim of the brokers. I thought you were in full partnership in the spoils—in the “whack,” as the thieves put it. But how did you get your start at last?

Also. Just about as easy as Stringem got my thousand dollar check. You see Stringem's money took me back to the mines. I worked from camp to camp, like all the rest of the poor devils, depositing earnings in the bank of Faro. My good boarding house woman showed me the door one day just because I couldn't pay;—was refused whisky for the same reason;—had to go up into the mountains for work. One Sunday, me and another miner went prospecting in a wooded gorge, where we suspected there was a lead. Thank God, we struck it. It turned out good from the word go. Six months afterward I sold my half for twenty thousand dollars. That's how I'm here to see the world.

Oreo. Do you still deposit with the bank of Faro?

Also. No! I'm an ungrateful fellow, I don't; though everybody knows the bank keeps faithfully all it gets. Sir! [*tragically, with thumbs in arm holes.*] I'm a bloated bond-holder! I have invested with the government. I support the government, gentlemen.

Mrs. Littlebee. [*Laughing outright.*] That reminds me, Charley, of the time when you sustained the government—and sent for the President.

Littlebee. And he didn't come.

Oreo. You were both too late to come in with the big-bug financiers during the war, whom Montesquieu describes—*Les Financiers soutiennent le Gouvernement comme la corde soutienne le pendu.*

Littlebee. And what may that mean?

Oreo. Why, that financiers sustain the government as the cord sustains the man it hangs.

Also. Bully! Beg pardon, madam—I beg your pardon! Havn't got the brakes down on this rude old miner's tongue yet. But them financiers did stick old Uncle Sam pretty well, when the South was pepperin' us in front:—they went for his pockets right lively.

Oreo. The great bankers and brokers had good times when the war was over playing that financier-cord business.

Littlebee. Don't forget to credit the patriotism of my old friend, Mr. Weave. He told me that during the critical days *after* the battle of Gettysburg, he gave days and nights of sleepless thought to the subject of the restoration of the National credit. I've been told he actually subscribed all his depositor's smoney to buy bonds for himself at thirty-nine cents gold. Wealth and the gratitude of his country were his reward.

Oreo. Sublime patriot! I wonder how he is now. Have heard since I came to Paris that he had lost everything in stocks, and that he and his wife are somewhere in the city now. I had many a racy and happy day in Rome eighteen years ago with the beautiful Isabella Vernon, who became his wife.

Mrs. Littlebee. Is it possible! Did you know Mrs. Weave?

Oreo. No; not Mrs. Weave, but Miss Vernon.

Mrs. Littlebee. I did not know her personally, but I have heard such strange things about her from those who did know her, or know of her in New York, that I am surprised, Mr. Oreo, that you and she were friends.

Oreo. When I knew her she was beautiful and rich; passionate, witty and sarcastic. Her wild will had been unbridled from childhood. To those she did not respect—an unreasonable tyrant. To those she hated—a cynic or a tigress; but with all, no hypocrite, no falseness, no little meanness. She failed to marry the man she loved, and did marry, as many a good girl has done, the best rich offer that followed. The rich Mr. Weave, an able and sly fox of finance, was the man. It was like wedding fox and tigress. She, impetuous, imperious, and direct; and he palavering, plausible and a rogue. She would come to hate him as inevitably as lime-juice seeths at the touch of soda.

Mrs. Littlebee. They say she was a perfect devil at home;—and yet that the servants all loved her.

Oreo. Then she was something better than devil to *them*.

Mrs. Littlebee. Of course—she must have been good to them.

Oreo. And if all facts were known, there are more poor homes in New York that bless the tigress than of those who speak well of the amiable fox who led your husband into his snare.

Mrs. Littlebee. Oh dear! How little we know people!

Marie. Pardon, Madame. Are you not speak ove Meesaes Weave,—ze grande belle madame who eez seek?

Mrs. Littlebee. Oui, Marie. What do you know about her?

Marie. Meester Weave eez die een zees house tree week ago—were poor—were poor. Eeze madame pay ze logement and ze funérale and zen go to ze petite apartément in ze *toit*—what you call—

Mrs. Littlebee. Roof, Marie.

Marie. Yais ze roof.

Oreo. And is in this house, now?

Marie. Oui, Monsieur.

Littlebee. This is a singular coincidence. We had looked forward to seeing you to night, old friend, as an unalloyed joy; but to meet Mr. Also. to learn from him the come-out of my friend Stringem, and now to have the shade of Weave, and the spirit of his wife all haunting us in this house, is an odd dénoument.

Oreo. [*With gravity.*] Do not jest. We have come to one of life's great cross-roads, where each wonders where next, and what next? It has made me sad. * * * I must leave you. Will see you all to-morrow; [*takes his hat.*] good night.

Tommy. Oh, Uncle Tom, don't go. [*Rushes to his arms and kisses him.*]

Oreo. Who wouldn't go, to get such a hug as that? Good night, all.

Also. Mr. Oreo seems to be taken all in a heap. I see you all wonder as I do. I won't intrude my company after the light's gone out. [*Goes for his hat.*]

Mrs. Littlebee. We are very sorry to see Mr. Oreo so suddenly saddened, and sorry that it must end your call.

Mr. Littlebee. Call again, Mr. Also. We'll compare notes of experience, at the mines.

Also. Thank you, thank you. I shall be only too glad to see your friendly face again in the midst of this great ménagerie. Good night, all.

All. Good night, Mr. Also.

[*End of Scene 1.*]

SCENE 2. A neat attic room in Hotel L'Athene, Paris. Mrs. Weave, emaciated, on a couch. A middle-aged servant with her.

[*A knock at the door. Servant goes to door and receives card from bell-boy—carries it to the bed-side and wakes Mrs. Weave from a state of lethargy.*]

Servant. Madame, will you look at this card?

Mrs. Weave. [*Reaches out her hand languidly—holds the card a moment without looking at it—then looks—(MR. T. OREO,)—looks wildly at it a moment—flushes, and closes her eyes—opens to read again—smiles—waits for a moment—then to servant slowly.*] Show—the—gen—tle—man up. [*Beckons servant to bed-side.*] Margaret, he is my brother—tell Garcon to show him up—and—and you—you go to the market and—bring me some flowers—violets and roses—don't hurry. Stop and see—your children. [*Servant goes, and Madame Weave rallies with a look of life and resolution. Soon Garcon opens the door and announces Monsieur. Oreo enters.*]

Oreo. [*Staggers with astonishment to see the condition of Isabella.*] Isabella Vernon!

Mrs. Weave. [*Coldly, proudly and clearly.*] ISABELLA VERNON.

Oreo. [*Advancing with impulsive warmth.*] My dear, dear old friend, can I not do something for you? [*Sizes her languid hands with such genuine emotion that she blushes and smiles.*]

Mrs. Weave. And you—do—still—care—for—what—is—left—of—Isabella Vernon?

Oreo. Always, always—and never more than now. Dear old friend—how you have suffered. How can I comfort you?

Mrs. Weave. Stay with me. It will not be long.

Oreo. [*Kissing her hand.*] I will. But you are not strong enough to talk. Shall I not excite you too much with souvenirs of the past, Isabella? I will come again.

Mrs. Weave. No, no. [*Clutches his hand.*] Tom, you will never leave me again. Sit down on the bed, and let me look at you. * * *

How strong and handsome you are ! * * Oh, Tom, Tom ! I am old—old before my time—and—dying. Thank God, thank God, you are here—you are here, Tom. I dreamed you were coming. I *knew* you were coming. You never loved me, Tom—but * * * I—loved you—I love you *now*.

Oreo. Isabella—no woman but you was ever graven on my heart.

Mrs. Weave. Oh Tom !—say that again—is it true ? [*Hides her face in her hands, then rising in bed, stretches out her arms to his embrace and fondles him.*] Yes, you loved me, but dared not marry me ! I thought so—sometimes—I guessed it. Poor Tom. Good Tom. [*Caressing his head.*] I love thee. I love thee. You were right, Tom : but you killed me. Let me die in thy arms, Tom ; and death will be the sweetest part of all my life.

Oreo. Isabella !—have I been a murderer ? Live, oh live for me now and I will atone for all that is past. [*Sitting up in bed she encloses his face between her hands to hold him fast, and looks lovingly and wildly in his eyes.*]

Mrs. Weave. Too late, Tom ; too late. And I am so happy now. Let me die—let me die—now—happy—happy—happy—my Oreo—my—Oreo. [*She kisses him rapturously and then sinks exhausted with increasing pallor. Oreo easing her head back upon the pillow while her life seems to ebb rapidly. In a few moments she opens her eyes to his, stretches her arms to his embrace without other movement, and breaths out*] Au revoir—au revoir. [*Her eyes to the ceiling with an expression of joy remaining on her face. Servant enters.*]

Margaret. Flowers for Madame.

Oreo. Give them to me. [*He seizes them and passes them before Isabella's face to catch her open eyes which retain their joyful look, but they do not move—and Oreo falls prostrate to the floor.*]

Margaret. [*Falling on her knees at the bed-side.*] Poor dear—it is all over.

[END.]

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